EXCLUSIVE: NEW SHORT STORY FOR STORY

Black Christmas for Blair as Mandelson and Robinson quit



Left, Peter Mandelson at the DTI yesterday afternoon: Downing Street announced his resignation at 12.30. Right, Geoffrey Robinson leaving the Treasury; his resignation was announced at 3.40pm

leader, called for an indepen-

dent investigation to reassure

the public that no other minis-

ters had undisclosed links with

Mr Robinson. "Public confi-

DAY TO GO

O°C LAST

David Rose/John Voos

never be believed again.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal

Democrat leader, said Mr Man-

delson made an honourable de-

cision. His exit is a setback to

Mr Ashdown, as Mr Mandelson

was one of the strongest sup-

porters of closer Labour-

TONY BLAIR was reeling last night from his worst crisis since becoming Prime Minister after the resignations of Peter Mannd Geoffrey Robinson, two life his senior ministers.

Mr Mandelson, one of Mr Blair's closest friends and allies, stunned the political world by quitting as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry over the £373,000 personal loan he took from the millionaire Mr Robinson to help him to buy a £475,000 house in Notting Hill, west London, in 1996.

Three hours later Mr Robinson resigned as Paymaster-General. He had already decided to stand down after stmas because of a string of disclosures about his business affairs before he became a Treasury minister. But he brought forward his announcement as Mr Mandelson became engulfed in controver-

The loss of Mr Mandelson is a devastating setback to the Prime Minister, as he is one of

the principal architects of New Labour. Cabinet ministers fear Mr Blair's image will be tarnished by his departure and that he will will badly miss Mr Mandelson's advice on political strategy. Mr Blair was told by Mr Mandelson he felt wretched

and angry with himself. Mr Mandelson hopes he has limited the damage by resigning 48 hours after details of the loan emerged. But ministers fear further damaging revelations about Mr Robinson's financial links with Gordon

Brown, the Chancellor. Mr Robinson is believed to have funded Mr Brown's Commons office in the run-up to last year's general election, and the Tories will table questions over their relationship when Parliament returns next month, as they step up attacks on "cronyism" at the heart of

the Blair administration. Mr Blair made clear that he hoped Mr Mandelson would return to his government one day, telling him in a letter that

he believed that, in the future. 'you will achieve much, more

> One option would be for Mr Mandelson to run Labour's campaign at the general election, possibly as party chairman. But he is thought unlikely to win back a cabinet post until he has won re-election in his Hartlepool constituency.

> Mr Blair told Mr Mandelson: 'It is no exaggeration to say that, without your support and advice, we would never have built New Labour."

The Prime Minister sought to stabilise his government last night by appointing two of Mr Mandelson's fellow modernisers to cabinet posts. The new Trade Secretary is Stephen Byers, already in the Cabinet as Chief Secretary to the Treasury. That post goes to Alan Milburn. the Health Minister, who wins promotion to the

Mr Byers and Mr Milburn are seen as the "Blair and Brown" of their generation.

INSIDE

- Relief and sadness at departures ■ Why Mandelson gave up the fight
- Millionaire who wanted to help ■ Unanswered questions over loan
- David Aaronovitch Review, page 3

Leading article Review, page 3

They both entered the Commons in 1992 and, like the Prime Minister and the Chanwould look to outsiders. cellor eight years earlier,

shared an office at Westminster. An emotional Mr Mandelson. who said he loved his job at the Department of Trade and Industry, insisted last night that he had not broken the law or the rules on the conduct of ministers. But he admitted he had made "a lapse of judgement" in taking the loan and not telling

"alarm bells" should have rung in his head about how the link

He said: "The price I have paid is a high price, but it has been a necessary one to restore people's confidence in government and politics as a whole

and also my own integrity. "Through my own misjudgement I have allowed the impression to be created of wrongdoing and I am not going to allow that charge to be laid DTI officials about it on enteragainst a government that I care about more than anything

else in the world." Mr Mandelson said people would have "different views" about his arrangement with Mr Robinson. Some would say he was entitled to take a loan from a dence in the Government's infriend, while others would think tegrity has been sorely "this is a whopping great loan undermined. If they dither now, and he's living beyond his

Mr Robinson said he had been subjected to "a persistent and unfair" set of allegations about his business affairs, which "had come to a point which was not acceptable any more". However, Downing Street suggested Mr Robinson like Mr Mandelson should have informed his civil ser-

vants about the loan. Downing Street said there would be no inquiry into the leaking of the Robinson loan to Mr Mandelson, despite speculation that it was linked to the Blair's official spokesman.

feud between him and Mr Brown. "I do not believe in the conspiracy theory," said Mr Peter Lilley, the deputy Tory

and more comes out, they will Liberal Democrat links. Will you give Mary a bed this Christmas?

At 16, Mary ran away from a life of abuse. Today she is homeless. Could you sleep easy on Christmas Eve knowing she was shivering in a bus shelter?

You can help keep Mary, and thousands of vulnerable people like her, safe and warm over Christmas. With £25 from you, Crisis can provide a warm bed, hot meals, clean clothes and someone to talk to at one

As the days count down to Christmas, nearly 10,000 homeless people are counting on Crisis. We're counting on you. Our service depends on public donations, So please send your £25 today - in time to help us buy the bedding food and clothes we need to bring Mary

He felt in his bones the show was over

RESIGNATION, at least it had a touch of class. One of Peter Mandelson's most valuable assets has always been to judge where a story is going, and yesterday he used it once again in the service of the party. He felt in his bones on Tues-

day night that the show was over and he told the Prime Minister so. After a night's sleep, he had not changed his mind and he didn't hang about.

Old Labour MP for Broms-

Protest over release

Woman who lost parents

in IRA blast has chained

herself to Maze gate

Home P6

Home P7

by court curfew

INSIDE THIS SECTION

grove, congratulated him You could tell when Terry

Likud defection

Israel's elections

Foreign P8

Foreign P9

Former minister is to

Willy Claes guilty

former Nato chief

Suspended sentence for

challenge Netanyahu in



DONALD MACINTYRE

warmly for his honourable decisiveness and wished him without irony - a happy Christ-

mas, that the party has never liked him quite as much as yesterday. This matters because on it may rest his chances of eventually making a comeback.

His decision to borrow from Geoffrey Robinson a sum that would take many of his constituents a lifetime to earn. and then to keep it secret, was a colossal misjudgement, and he was right in the interests of himself and the Government to go. Not only that; but had he tried to stay, it would have been

Blair to part with Mr Robinson. as Mr Mandelson and Mr Blair undoubtedly recognised. . What happens to him now?

He will rediscover the life on the back benches that he led from 1992-94. He will speak and write on Europe, and do some travelling, "exporting Blairism" as he puts it. He has always had a yen to run a large organisation, perhaps in the private sector. But he has never managed to stay away from politics for long. and he is not that likely to leave much more difficult for Mr now. He is entitled to enjoy him-

self. But if he is sensible he will ously friendless world of high resist the temptation to fly so close to the sun with his rich and powerful friends that he loses his appetite for the hard and unglamorous graft of backbench politics.

Having ruefully told the editor of the Hartlepool Mail yesterday that he will have more time to spend in his constituency, he would be well advised to do just that. Mr Blair will regard his departure as a grave loss - for his advice, for his friendship in the notori-

oddly reassuring figure to the middle ground of politics outside the party - not because he was loved, but because his sheer presence made the idea that the Labour left would reassert itself so preposterous. For all these reasons, Mr Blair will want him back perhaps running the next election campaign, and perhaps in the Cabinet after that Now it's up to him.

politics, and for what

he symbolised. He was an

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enclose a cheque made payable to Crisis. OR debit my: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Switch[†] other ____

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Name (caps) Mr/Mrs/Ms . Crisis, FREEPOST, Room 152, London El IBR

INSIDE THE REVIEW

The Independent wishes its readers a happy and peace ful Christmas. In common with other national newspapers, we shall not be publishing on Christmas Day, but we shall be back on Boxing Day with a

quiz of the year.

*THE INDEPENDENT

Virginia Ironside 'I can't stand my family

three-section paper, including the Magazine and the Features P5

at Christmas. What should I do?" Features P5

CD Choice Our critics choose the year's best rock albums Arts P8

Anthony Quinn Review of Enemy of the State, plus the Top Ten Win a prize in our Christmas competition Films of the Year

Film P9



TODAY'S TELEVISION

Released rapist is bound

Interest rate cut

Business P11

Sport P18

The Monetary Policy

Committee has voted

Who, what, when?

Test your skills on our

sporting quiz of the year

unanimously for rate cut

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THE INDEPENDENT ON BOXING DAY

No regrets. Robbie Williams and the faces of 1998. Plus the quiz of the year

IN THE SATURDAY MAGAZINE

EPLUS A COMIC **EPIC BY MARTIN** NEWELL & ANNA PAVORD'S 1999 GARDEN ALMANAC

. IN, WEEK OUT: DEBORAH ROSS, HOWARD JACOBSON, HAMISH MCRAE, ROBERT FISK, TERENCE BLACKER, JOHN WALSH, RICHARD WILLIAMS, DAVID AARONOVITCH, ANNE MCEIVOY, THOMAS SUTCLIFFE, MILES KINGTON, SUE ARNOLD, ANDREAS WHITTAM SMITH

Shocked MPs applaud swift decision to go

WESTMINSTER REACTION

THE RESIGNATIONS of Peter By Paul Waugh Mandelson and Geoffrey Robinson were greeted with scarcely concealed delight by the Tories and a mixture of relief and genuine sadness among stunned Labour MPs.

manner of the two departure. has received any kinds of fione after 12 months and the nancial support from him or other within 48 hours of allegations first surfacing, struck support he has given them." politicians from all parties.

Mr Mandelson's resignation came as a shock to MPs who believed he had carried out a reasonably efficient damagelimitation exercise in a series of media interviews on Tuesday.

Even left-wingers, many of whom had rubbed their hands with giee at the former secretary of state's discomfort, were imthe delays over Mr Robinson's and correct" decision to reremoval won him few friends.

The deputy Tory leader, independent inquiry into the events and claimed that it was 'extraordinary" that the Prime Minister had not concluded in resigning," he said.

broken. "The whole affair has shown that ministers have gone out of their way to hide their links with Geoffrey Robinson. We now need clear assur-The stark contrast in the ances that no other minister owe him any obligations for any

Other members of the Shadow Cabinet were less statesmanlike in private. "We can hardly believe our luck," said "Christmas has come early," said another:

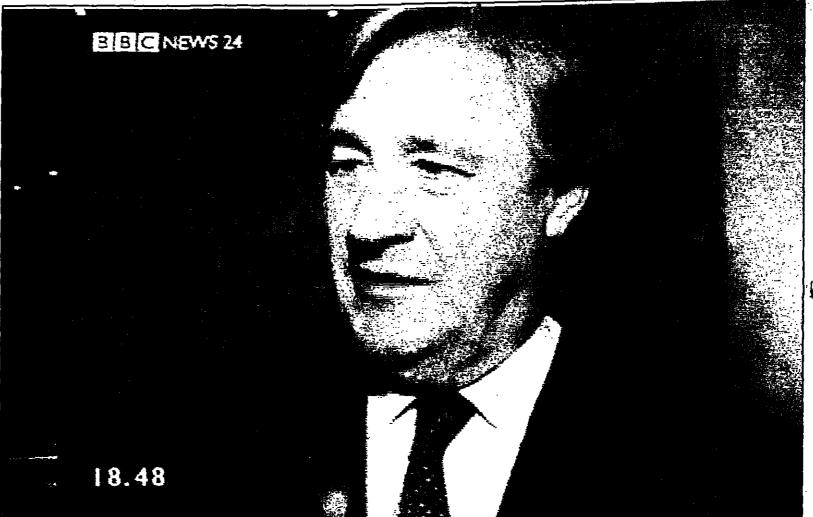
The Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, who saw Mr Mandelson as a key ally in his grand project to realign the left of British politics, said essed by his swift decision. But he had made an "honourable sign. "All of us who value probity and the conduct of public Peter Lilley, called for a full and duty would like to think that we would have done the same thing. We have almost forgotten what it is like to see ministers

Charles Kennedy, a member of the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee that reprimanded Mr Robinson over aspects of his business affairs, said the minister's 55-second apology to the House proved he had to go.

That apology was inadequate and subsequently he and Peter Mandelson became like two rock climbers tied together against the face of overwhelming odds. When one fell, it came as no surprise that both would be dragged down."

Paul Flynn, Labour MP for Newport West, said the resignations had finally succeeded in clearing out the "mess" that had dogged the Government. "It's right they should go. After the Bernie Ecclestone affair and Derek Draper, we are losing that reputation as a sleazefree party," he said.

"There's a feeling that we are too fond of luxury lifestyles and we are too close to big business and lobbyists. We should put some clear pink water between ourselves and them."



Geoffrey Robinson being interviewed on the BBC yesterday

Parliamentary Labour Party, said many MPs would regret Mr Mandelson's resignation but saw Mr Robinson's departure as inevitable. "The party will be sad about losing Peter's talents, but there is an element of reassurance around that we are serious about living up to the high standards we set ourselves.

Rhodri Morgan, MP for

tender for First Secretary of the Welsh Assembly, said Tony Blair's decision to accept Mr Mandelson's resignation must have been his most difficult to date. "We are all going to sleep easier because if it had carried on festering horrendously over Christmas the Government

would have suffered," he said. Martin Bell, the IndepenMandelson: "Common sense tells you that when you get a he's so important in a party not loan of this size, you declare it exactly budding with talent. - that's the lesson to all MPs, After a suitable penance, he can if in doubt, declare it."

The author and journalist, Robert Harris, one of Mr Mandelson's closest friends, said that he was sure the former secretary of state would one day

such a political animal and

THE WORLD

stirred up by Mr Mandelson's abrasive political style, together with continuing inquiries into the loan deal, make a be very happy to see him go,"

anger felt by some in the labour movement over plans to water down the Government's plans

for union recognition. months and I am sure a lot of ordinary trade unionists will

Most spectacular in long line of political downfalls*

THE RESIGNATIONS of Peter By Paul Waugh Mandelson and Geoffrey Robinson represent one of the most spectacular in a long line of Parliamentary downfalls.

They may lack the spice of the Profumo, Parkinson and Mellor affairs but, in terms of sheer political impact, yesterdav's events will rank prominently in the history of ministerial departures.

One of the most notorious

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AND LINUS GREGORIADIS

government resignations was that of Sir Charles "three-in-abed" Dilke, a minister in the Gladstone administration of 1882. Dilke was forced to quit his post as local government minister in 1886 when he was cited in a divorce case by his 22year-old sister-in-law, Virginia Crawford. Mrs Crawford accused him of seducing her and teaching her "every French vice in the book".

Sex reared its bead again in 1963, when John Profumo, the Secretary of State for War, carried out what is possibly the most famous resignation this century. Profumo left the Conservative government after lying to the House of Commons about having sexual relations with Christine Keeler, a

HISTORY OF SCANDALS

taché in London.

Labour scandals tended to centre on more lofty affairs. such as the 1967 departure of James Callaghan, the Chancellor, after Prime Minister Harold Wilson devalued the pound. In 1983, Cecil Parkinson, the

call-girl, who was also having an affair with a Soviet naval at-Industry, was forced to resign after the disclosure of his affair with Sara Keays, his former secretary. The furore surrounding his resignation, which was reluctantly accepted by Margaret Thatcher, ruined Conservative celebrations after a landslide

LIGHTING UP

HIGH TIDES

general election victory.

Mrs Thatcher's own downfall in 1990 was hastened by the departure of both Nigel Lawson, Chancellor of the Exchequer. and Sir Geoffrey Howe, Foreign Secretary, after two momentous resignation speeches in the Commons.

Sex scandal soon reappeared in 1992, when David Mellor, Heritage Secretary, resigned after disclosures about an affair with Antonia de San-

YESTERDAY

0.2 0.07

RAIN OR

SHINE...

in Canada's history.

including 700,000 left without power for more than a month.

cha, an actress, and his failure to declare a paid holiday from Mona Bauwens, daughter of a high-ranking Palestine Liberation Organisation official.

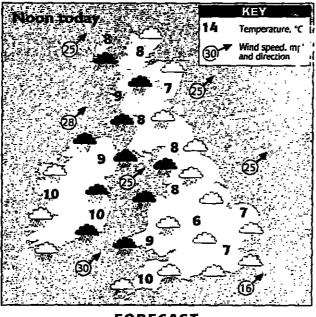
The key charge of sleaze against John Major's government took off two years later when Neil Hamilton, Corporate Affairs minister, was exposed for accepting cash for asking questions in the House of Commons.

In 1995, Jonathan Aitken resigned as Chief Secretary to the Treasury to concentrate on his legal battles with the media over allegations concerning his business activities.

Tony Blair's only cabinet resignation until yesterday had been that of Ron Davies, Sector tary of State for Wales, who in October over a "serious lanse of judgement" on Clapham Common, south London.



Sunday 27th December at 3.35pm



FORECAST

and, London, E Anglia, E England: Cold and frosty with a few sunny t cloud will increase bringing heavy rain this afternoon. A freshening sterly wind. Max temp 7-9C (45-48F).

Wales, Cout N, NW & SW England, Lake Dist, isle of Man: Soon becoming very wet and windy but it will turn mild. A strong south-westerly wind, Max temp

NE England: Cold this morning, Cloud will build with rain this afternoon, some of it heavy. A freshering south-mesterly wind. Max temp 7-8C (45-46F).

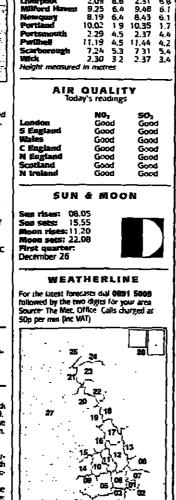
N Ireland: Overcast, wet and windy this morning but it will become very mild, Rain petering out towards evening. A strong south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11C (46-52F).

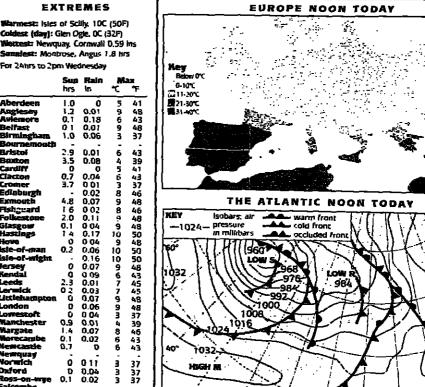
SE & NE Scotland, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, N Isles: Inland areas will have frost at first. This will clear but it will become rather wet and windy this afternoon, A strong south-westerly wind. Max temp 7-8C (45-46F).

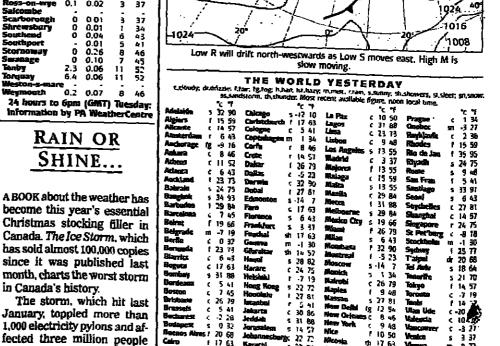
Christmas Day will be mild but rather wet in the south. Eisewhere will have show ers, but any snow is likely to be confined to the mountain peaks of Scotland. On Boxing Day wet and possibly very windy weather will spread north-eastwards.

London: A41 Finchley Rd. From Swiss Cottage to Fortune Green. Major works at Finchley Rd Gyratory. Until 31st December Combridgewhire A1 between Alconbury and Hadden. Construction, lane closuros and contration. Until 31st December. 1 leady a 3 (wystanta case). The fairner sings both ways and a 50 mph speed lind in lone. Until 1st January 1939. Bristot: MS J18-19. Major Floathworks on Augumouth Biddge, Lindi 1st January 2001. Lancashins: MS Belween J27 Standish and

OUTLOOK WELL
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Richard Services, Und 15th February 1999.
West Yorkshire: M1 Between J42 Lotthouse
Intonchange (M62) and J43 Sounton.
Roadworks and a 50mph speed limit.
Until 31st December 1998.
Cumbrie: M6. 37 Kendel. Roadworks. carregeway reduced to 2 tanes both ways with
a 50mph speed limit. 1 mile south of the junction. Until 18th January 1999.
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The Automobile Association. Calls charved







The move upmarket that led to a 'cabinet minister's fall from grace

BY ANDREW GRICE Political Editor

PETER HAS got new friends he has joined the salon tencomplained shortly after last year's general election. "For some reason, he is impressed with the Saatchis and the Charles and Carla Powell set. He should remember his roots."

An integral part of Mr Mandelson's new life was his new £475,000 house in Notting Hill. one of the smartest neighbourhoods in west London. His move puzzled the many friends who had lived near him in Islington; they wondered why the New Labour stronghold in N1 was no longer good enough.

But few of them would have guessed that his move upmarket would sow the seeds of his rapid and astonishing fall from grace yesterday, only five months after entering the Cabinet as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

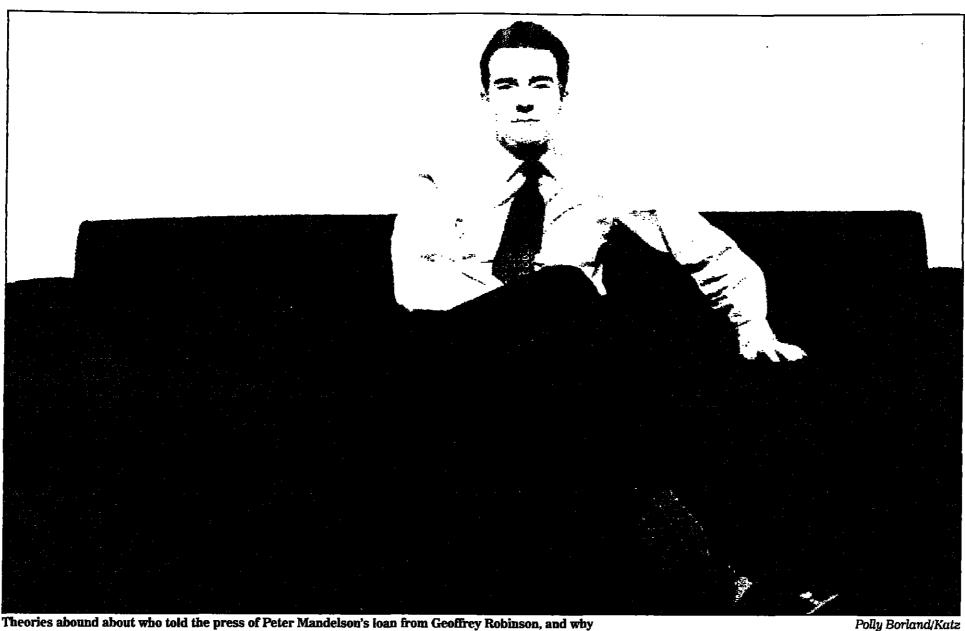
Friends did wonder where the money for the new house had come from. They had no idea that he had turned to Geoffrey Robinson, a millionaire Labour MP languishing on the back benches in 1996 when the fateful £373,000 loan was sealed, who later became Paymaster-General. At the time, details of Mr Robinson's offshore trusts and business links with the media tycoon Robert Maxwell had not emerged. To Mr Mandelson, he seemed safe.

The two men agreed to keep their astonishing arrangement a secret. At the time, it suited them both. With hindsight, Mr Mandelson admits he should have told Tony Blair - and, crucially, his top civil servant at the Department of Trade and Industry (DTD) when he won promotion to the Cabinet in July.

The dark secret returned to haunt Mr Mandelson this month as he heard rumours about the contents of a hostile biography of him by Paul Routledge, the Mirror columnist, to be published in the new year. The word was that the book's unique selling point" was the

Mandelson that Charlie Whelan - his sworn enemy, press secdrinks with journalists that he | ludicrous for words". had "got the story out". Mr

THE ROAD TO RESIGNATION



Theories abound about who told the press of Peter Mandelson's loan from Geoffrey Robinson, and why

that Mr Whelan had tipped off Mr Routledge about the loan. In the event, the story sur-

faced before the book in both Mr Routledge's newspaper and The Guardian on Tuesday. Mr Whelan strongly denies that he was ter's two most influential allies. the source, and the Brown camp suspects that Mr Mandelson's allies may have launched a preledge biography aimed at "getting the story out of the way" retary to the Chancellor, Gordon during Parliament's Christmas Brown, and a close friend of recess. The Mandelson camp both Mr Routledge and Mr dismisses the idea that it leaked Robinson - had boasted over the damaging revelation as "too

On Wednesday last week,

story was about to break. On Thursday, his office at the DTI tipped off Alastair Campbell, the Downing Street press secretary and a friend of Mr Mandelson's as they are the Prime Minis-

Mr Campbell told Mr Blair, iously at his watch: he was about on the previous night's bombing of Iraq. None the less, he ordered that Sir Richard Wilson, the Cabinet Secretary, should investigate whether Mr Mandelson had breached the code of conduct for ministers.

Sir Richard concluded that

ed" himself against any conflict of interest by standing down from handling the DTI inquiry into Mr Robinson's business activities in September.

Mr Blair hoped that would be the end of the matter and, in any case, had his hands full with who responded by looking anx- Iraq. But Mr Mandelson spent an anxious weekend, at first in his Hartlepool constituency and then at his Notting Hill home. He feared that the only reason his ticking timebomb had not gone off was the air

> strategy with close friends, in- told one friend. To another ally, chuding Mr Campbell, he hoped the doyen of political strategists Chequers at 10pm on Tuesday. to resign after prolonging the Minister did not stand in his way.

Mandelson assumed this meant Mr Mandelson got wind that the Mr Mandelson had "insulat- he would be able to survive the conceded: "This was a very big storm about to break around operation against me." As Mr Mandelson continfor Geoffrey to help me. He is ued his frantic round of media

interviews on Tuesday morning, Mr Campbell told Westminster journalists that Mr Blair was standing by Mr Mandelson. Another Downing Street official told them; "You won't be getting any red meat." hausted Mr Mandelson be-

lieved he was fighting a losing Monday. As details from the battle. He feared that yesterday morning's newspapers would he had a fight on his hands to be bad, and his media instincts, Discussing his fightback keep his job. "I was reeling," he as usual, were right.

confessing to a "misjudgement"

in not telling his civil servants about the Robinson loan when he moved to the DTL He said the affair was damaging the reputation of the Government and the Labour Party and, because of their close relationship, feared it would also damage Mr Blair.

promises to "clean up" politics Mr Mandelson told him: "We can't be like the last lot."

He was also mindful of the way that Tory ministers facing allegations of personal or financial sleaze tried desper-He telephoned Mr Blair at ately to hang on to office, only



he resigned quickly, he might be able to safeguard his integrity. Mr Mandelson feared that at

the DTI he was in the wrong department to do an effective job after the disclosures. He knew the media were bound to judge his performance against the background of the Robinson affair - and to seek more damaging revelations.

He probably calculated that. as a backbencher, it would be easier to withstand the barrage of allegations about his private life, which he expects in the Routledge biography.

Mr Blair, who by now had time to digest a full report by Downing Street officials on the affair, was pessimistic about his friend's prospects but reluctant to abandon him. He told Mr Mandelson to "sleep on it" and not make a final decision until the morning. But both men knew he would have to resign. "We knew the game was up," one close ally admitted.

Rumours that Mr Mandelson might resign began to circulate at Westminster after Jack Cunningham, the Cabinet's enforcer, appeared to distance the Government from him in a BBC Radio 4 interview yesterday morning, admitting that mistakes had been made.

Press speculation that Mr Mandelson may have misled the Britannia Building Society by not revealing the Robinson loan when he obtained a mortgage showed that the storm was far from dving down. How-Mindful of Mr Blair's ever this was not mentioned when Mr Mandelson rang Mr told him: "In the cold light of day, it is clear I have to resign.

"Peter's mind was made up. He was very upset, but he felt it was the right thing to do," Mr Blair's spokesman said. This time, a sad and subdued Prime

*Dear Tony, I can't believe I am writing this letter'

by Peter Mandelson to the Prime Minister yesterday:

"Dear Tony, I can scarcely believe I am writing this letter to you. As well as being one of my closest friends you are a close colleague whose leadership and political qualities I value beyond all others.

"As you have, I have reflected overnight on the situlation concerning the loan I took from Geoffrey Robinson and I have decided to resign from the

"As I said publicly yesterday, I do not believe that I have done anything wrong or improper. But I should not, with all candour, have entered into the arrangement. I should, having done so, told you and other coleagues whose advice I value. And I should have told my permanent secretary on learning of the inquiry into Geoffrey Robinson, although I had entirely stood aside from this.

"I am sorry about this situation. But we came to power promising to uphold the highest possible standards in public life. We have not just to do

so, but we must be seen to do

"Therefore with huge regret I wish to resign. I am very proud of the role I played in helping you and previous leaders of the Labour Party to make our party electable and to win our historic victory last May. I am proud of the trust you placed in me both at the Cabinet office and at the DTL "In just 18 months you have

helped to transform this country and the Government has made huge progress delivering on our manifesto and its programme of modernisation. "I wili always be a loyal Labour man and I am not pre-

attack this issue has provoked. "You can be assured, of course, of my continuing friendship and total loyalty. Yours ever, Peter.

This is the text of the Prime Minister's reply to Mr Mandelson's letter of resignation: "Dear Peter, you will know better than anyone the feelings

Government suffer the kind of litical colleagues.

> built New Labour. "It was typical of you, when

pared to see the party and the Peter Mandelson's letter of resignation ...

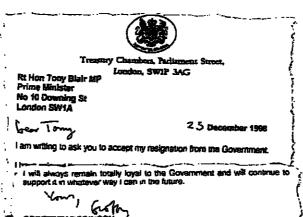
and I have been personal friends and the closest of po-

"It is no exaggeration to say that without your support and advice we would never have

we spoke last night, that your thought was for the reputation of the Labour Party and the with which I write to you. You Government and that you be-

lieved that since there had been a misjudgement on your part, then, as you said to me 'we can't be like the last lot' and that what we are trying to achieve for the country is more important than any individ-

"But I also want you to know that you have my profound thanks for all you have



... Followed by Geoffrey Robinson's words of regret

future, you will achieve much, much more with us. Yours ever, Tony.

him. "It was perfectly legitimate

just a generous soul. He gave

me a loan I will repay in due

At 5pm on Monday, he knew

course, with interest," Mr Man-

the story would break the fol-

lowing morning, and prepared

interviews, starting on BBC

TV's Newsnight programme on

first editions emerged, he knew

This is the text of Geoffrey Robinson's resignation letter

to the Prime Minister: "Dear Tony, I am writing to ask you to accept my resignation from the Government. "I have enjoyed the work of

welcomed in particular the opportunity to work on the economic strategy that is designed to secure the renewal of our country. But, as you know, I have been subjected to a persistent - and I believe unfair - set of allega-

tions about my business affairs. "I have already accepted responsibility and have apolodone and my belief that, in the the last 18 months and have gised to the House of

the past concerning registration of interests.

"But although my affairs have been under full political and media scrutiny for more than a year, it is clear that I have not misused my position either as an MP or minister.

"I have done nothing wrong in any of these areas and I will vigorously defend myself

against any allegations. In the case of the loan to Peter Mandelson, I merely considered myself in 1996 as someone in a position to help a long standing friend, with no

request for anything in return. There comes a time when. after more than 12 months of a highly charged political campaign, the point has been reached when I feel that it is no longer right that you or your Government should be affected by or have to contend with these attacks.

"I will always remain totalloyal to the Government and will continue to support it in whatever way I can in the fu-

Commons for oversights in This is the text of the letter from the Prime Minister to Geoffrey Robinson:

"Dear Geoffrey, thank you for your letter. I accept your decision with regret. I know that you have felt these past months hounded by the campaign against you.

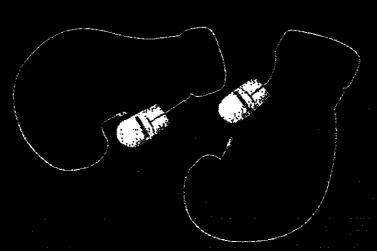
"I want you to know, however, that what I remember and thank you for, is your immense contribution to the Government.

"The windfall tax which helped fund the New Deal for the unemployed: the reform of the corporate tax system; the saving of the coal industry, the agreement with the private sector to give the biggest boost to science we have ever given to Britain; the reinvigoration of the Private Finance Initiative: for all your business sense and helpful advice, we thank

You have performed the task of public servant with great dedication in circumstances of extraordinary difficulty. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Yours ever, Tony."

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A political triangle that fell apart

PETER MANDELSON may have BY DONALD MACINTYRE moved from asset to liability in the last few days. But several of those close to Tony Blair were last night making little effort to pretend that his departure was other than a serious blow to the Prime Minister.

Full of internal tensions it fraction of the Cabinet is not so large that it can lose one of its three founder members, however controversial

Mr Mandelson is a figure who generates so many myths that it is hard to separate the legend from reality. He was by no means the only architect of the Labour Party's modernisation. But he has, like Mao's comrades in 1948, a pretty spe-

ty begun by Neil Kinnock when he became Labour leader in

Indeed if anyone should take the blame, or credit, for the rise of Peter Mandelson it is Neil Kinnock, who backed his apmay be but the modernising pointment by the National Executive Committee as director of communications in 1985.

Mr Mandelson proved an invaluable ally to Mr Kinnock and others in the then Labour leader's beroic struggle to reverse the huge set-backs to the party's popularity inflicted by the surge of Bennism five year earlier.

Strange as it seems now, tent Gordon Brown, were once,

Mandelson's protégés, Mr Blair, especially, was "trained up" by Mr Mandelson in the art of handling the media - a highly important skill for a man who

would become the most media

conscious of post-war Prime

Each of them, as Mr Mandelson started to see as early as the 1987 election, were not only the most talented politicians of their generation but were also developing a farreaching vision for how Labour

natural party of government. In policy terms, Mr Mandelson was nowhere near as inventive as either Mr Brown and Mr Blair. But his consistency as Tony Blair, and to a lesser ex- a Labour Party revisionist and his signal expertise in devising THE RISE TO INFLUENCE

particular issue, his ability to compress it into a soundbite which would lodge in the public mind, and his knowledge of which journalists would be most receptive to which message, were all invaluable assets

to his more senior colleagues. From 1988 to 1990 and again from 1992 to 94 the men increasingly worked together until they were acting as an alcould once again become the most inseparable trio.

The traumatic period of uncertainty over whether Mr Brown or Mr Blair would run as leader in the wake of John Smith's death famously sowed the seeds of the enmity between Mr Brown and Mr Mandelson,

was Mr Blair who looked the likely winner.

But while one side of one of

the most remarkable triangles in British politics was fractured, the other two sides - between Mr Brown and Mr Blair and between Mr Mandelson and Mr Blair - remained intact. Mr Blair regarded Mr Man-

deison as too controversial a figure within the Labour Party to make him an open member of his leadership campaign team. But as "Bobby" he performed a clandestine and central role in the campaign, giving his usual mixture of media, tactical and strategic advice. And he continued to do so, along with

Gordon Brown, up to and including the general election. While Mr Brown was in over-

all charge of the campaign and its strategy, Mr Mandelson had spent the best part of two years planning its mechanics while continuing, along with the then Shadow Chancellor, to give a stream of political advice. And with the help of Philip Gould, the man he brought in to provide research, after he was appointed director of communications in 1985, Mr Mandelson also gave

polling advice. It seemed baffling to many in a party which took the best part of a decade to shake off its deep suspicion of, and hostility towards, the press that someone whose initial skills and experience were in media relations .

two important points. One is the nature of oppositions, for whom the media is virtually the only weapon, apart from parliament, at their disposal. And the second is, as Mr Mandelson had been one of the first prominent Labour figures to realise, the Marshall McLuhan-esque truth that in modern politics it is impossible to separate the medium from the message. Just as the good salesman whose product is thought to be unsafe, or useless, goes back to his bosses and tells them to change the product, so the political media

importance. But that overlooks

fluence in policy. This helps to explain not only Mr Mandelson's role, but the steadily increasing impor-

man begins to exercise and in-

deison provided not only advice. but in the notoriously friendless world of high politics, friendship. Last but not least, he was a lightning conductor. As the leadership's most unpopular figure he was able to do down its enemies and take the heat by being its public defender when it got into trouble. And in all this Mr Mandelson had a revisionist clarity which dated at least from his time as a Lam-

Mr Mandelson has never been short of faults but inconsistency hasn't been one of them. There will no doubt be jubilation in many quarters of the Labour Party this Christmas.

beth councillor in the early

The millionaire businessman who wanted to help

GEOFFREY ROBINSON gave up his hold on Treasury office after surviving months of speculation and controversy about his business background

It was finally an act of generosity that brought him down, and Downing Street was quick to absolve the millionaire businessman from blame. "Geoffrey is not a leper," the Prime Minister's official spokesman said. "He has been a Labour member of Parliament for a very long time and he is somebody who is very generous."

However, it was the continuing questioning of Mr Robinson's business links and his secret funding of Gordon Brown's private office in opposition that made his resignation inevitable.

Disclosures are still emerging of the undisclosed sums he gave to the Smith Political Economy Unit, created after the

BY COLIN BROWN Chief Political Correspondent

death of the party leader John Smith, to give support to Mr Brown as Shadow Chancellor before the 1997 general election.

Mr Robinson's penthouse in Park Lane, central London, has regularly been used by the Chancellor and his advisers, Ed Balls and Charlie Whelan, for planning meetings and watching football on television, with the support of room service from the Grosvenor Park hotel.

The "charges" against Mr Robinson include:

The Department of Trade and Industry inquiry into allegations of possible accounting offences by Hollis Industries plc. a Maxwell company of which Mr Robinson was chairman. The accounts showed the chairman receiving £200,000 in re-

muneration which he denied

ever receiving; The Committee on Standards and Privileges which said, in a report in January, that his interest in the Orion Trust "would have been better registered" although he was cleared of breaching the rules of the

■ On18 November, the committee found he had broken the rules of the House by failing to register his share-holding in Stenbell Ltd, through which he paid staff salaries at the New Statesman. He was censured and forced to make a personal

apology in the Commons; And the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards has been asked to investigate his failure to register his business relationship with Robert Maxwell between 1987 and 1991.

ROBINSON'S DEFENCE



Mr Robinson and his wife, Marie-Elena

a furniture manufacturer. Mr He made his millions from Robinson was managing di- TransTec, a Midlands company rector of Jaguar Cars by the age he founded specialising in the of 33, before winning his seat for transfer of ideas from univer-Coventry North West in 1976. sity to the shopfloor.

During his time at Jaguar, he met Joska Bourgeois, a Belgian millionairess who gave him the backing that enabled him to found TransTec. After her death aged 81, she left him another for-tune, which be placed in an off-sures to the House. They found shore trust.

His growing wealth made enemies in the Labour Party and he fought off a Bennite attempt to oust him from his seat. With the collapse of the left, the Blairites saw his value. He was appointed Paymaster-General in May, last year, to spearhead the drive to bring private finance into public schemes. He refused to draw his ministerial salary. "He was a bit naive. and like a fish out of water in politics," said a minister. "But he didn't draw a salary. He didn't need all this aggro. He just did it because he wanted to make contribution."

"sleaze" allegations against them – scrutinised his business dealings and found a number of examples where he had failed he had offshore holdings worth an estimated £30m.

The writing was on the wall for Mr Robinson when Mr Blair decided against using his sumptuous Tuscan villa last summer for his family holiday, having enjoyed its attractions the previous year. "It marked the card for Geoffrey," said a ministerial source. "He was very put out and puzzled but he recognised he was drawing too much flak and Blair

was distancing himself." The Prime Minister's instinct was to drop Mr Robinson from the Government in his July reshuffle and replace him with Geoff Hoon, the Lord

The Tories - stung by the Chancellor's spokesman in the Commons, but Mr Brown fought to keep Mr Robinson in his Treasury team.

The Chancellor and the multi-millionaire had become firm friends. He was appointed to the Treasury team to bring a business vitality to the Blair government.

Mr Robinson's business insight brought him some surprising allies within the Cabinet. One of his strongest supporters was John Prescott, the deputy Prime Minister, who privately found his knowledge of business invaluable in dealing with the private sector to finance public transport schemes.

"He came up with new ideas and if John came up with ideas, he would not reject them. He would say, 'Let's talk about it', and find a way of making them work," said a Whitehall source.

The rise of Blairites with modern ideas

THE CABINET RESHUFFLE

TONY BLAIR reaffirmed his authority over his Cabinet yesterday with the promotion of the moderniser, Stephen Byers, to the post of Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

It was a clear signal that the Prime Minister wants Mr Byers to continue with the policv direction taken by Peter Mandelson over the semi-privatisation of the Post Office and trade union recognition.

Mr Mandelson angered Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, by refusing to fully privatise the Post Office, opting instead for greater commercial freedom within the public sector.

Geoffrey Robinson is expected to be replaced as Paymaster General by Geoff Hoon, Lord Irvine's ministerial spokesman in the House of Commons. The Lord Chancellor was said to be resisting the pressure to allow his junior minister to be moved by Mr Blair, but was expected

to be overruled. Mr Hoon, a well-liked minBY COLIN BROWN AND PAUL WAUGH

in for the post last July, but was kept in his position as Commons spokesman for the Lord Chancellor's department after a successful rearguard action by Mr Brown to stop Mr Robinfew people who can get on with . Social Security Secretary. Lord Irvine like Geoff Hoon, and he doesn't want to lose him, but it looks like he will be over-

ruled," said a Whitehall source. State for Health, was promoter son, Joe, aged seven, with his ed into the Cabinet by Mr Blair to replace Mr Byers as Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Mr Milburn, 40, is regarded as hard-headed and a Brown fice and at party conferences. supporter - which may have cost him the Cabinet promotion self as much a moderniser as Mr Byers, who is a close friend.

There was speculation last night in Whitehall that Mr Blair

wili replace Mr Milburn as health minister with John Denham, the minister of social security, a Blairite who did much of the spade work on the reform of pensions before Frank Field resigned last July from the task of "thinking the unthinkable". Since then, Mr Denham has won his spurs as the numson being sacked. "There are ber two to Alistair Darling, the

Mr Milburn will be able to mark a double celebration tomorrow. Christmas Day is also the second birthday of his sec-Alan Milburn, the Minister of ond son, Danny. He has anothpartner Ruth Briel Mr Milburn takes his parental responsibilities seriously. He has been seen pushing a pram to his of-

He stayed up all night writing the White Paper on health last July - but he regards him- reforms to be introduced in April, and the only way he could stay awake was to play rap and soul music, loudly, in his office, causing a few raised eyebrows.



Stephen Byers (left), the newSecretary of State for Trade and Industry and Alan Milburn, the new Chief Secretary to the Treasury

Mr Milburn is expected to give his successor a hard grilling over the finances at the thought he was over-generous towards the GPs," said a friend last night. Mr Milburn made his mark as shrewd questioner on the Public Accounts Committee after winning his Darlington seat in 1992 and his skills at probing public finances will be well used in the Treasury.

The promotion of Mr Byers cil, his grasp of policy, media Department of Health. "He justly be described as "mete-enemies has led some to comoric", making him tipped as a pare him with Mr Blair. future leadership candidate.

The MP for Typeside North reached the Cabinet this summer, just six years after entering Parliament, to become

Chief Secretary to the Treasury. A former law lecturer and leader of North Tyneside Coun- body to decide which employ-

to the DTI was the latest stage savvy and ability to rise effortin a political career that can lessly without making too many

He has inherited a controversial compromise over trade union recognition. Mr Mandelson upset the unions, who fear the forthcoming Fairness at Work legislation will give too much power to an arbitration

ers should concede trade union recognition. Mr Byers is likely to face a Commons rebellion by Labour MPs over the detail on the Bill. The TUC last night said it looked forward to working with Mr Byers. "Next year promises to be an historic year

Despite his Blairite credentials, the 45-year-old MP can. and frequently does, claim that his background proves that he is not some Millbank clone obsessed with the metropolis. His first taste of politics came in the North East, where he was one for trade unions with the Fairof the "young bloods" who is fought off both right-wingers ness at Work Bill due in January and with the new and militants to lead North Tyopportunities for social partneside council. "That put steel nership," a statement said. in my back-bone," he said later.

Crucial questions remain over loan

BY ANDREW VERITY

CRUCIAL QUESTIONS remain over whether Peter Mandelson Correctly declared the £373,000 loan from Geoffrey Robinson when he applied for a mortgage for his Notting Hill home.

without regular interest repayments, as Mr Robinson had agreed with the former trade secretary, would normally be considered a "gift".

Under the normal procedures of the Britannia Building Society, which granted the mortgage, Mr Mandelson was required to sign a declaration insist on being told of any out-

stating he had not arranged any other loan, second mortgage or improvement grant in connec-Northumberland Place.

He was also required to certify that all the details he had given on Britannia's mortgage application form were correct. could not recall whether he declared the loan when he Society said it was legally barred from answering questions on his application because

of the Data Protection Act. Mortgage lenders usually MORTGAGE MYSTERY

keep up repayments. Mortgage experts also sug-gested yesterday that a loan Mr Mandelson has said he said: "Anyone who applies for a signally waive some of their norloan with Britannia is required mal lending criteria to VIPs, to give us details of all their but will still carry out certain applied to borrow £150,000 in financial commitments. We late 1996. Britannia Building always need to establish whether or not a customer is fully able to repay."

When a mortgage represents only a small fraction of a property's value, lenders also expect to be informed of how

tion with the property in standing loans held by a bor- the borrower is funding the rower, to let them assess the rest of the purchase. While risk that the mortgage appli- gifts from relatives are cant will become unable to accepted, commercial loans are frowned upon.

Building societies will occavital checks.

Failure to disclose a substantial second loan, secured against the same property. would trigger immediate concern, because it would prevent the lender forcing a sale should

In his letter to Elizabeth Filkin, the new parliamentary commissioner for standards, Mr Mandelson claimed his loan from Mr Robinson was not a gift, in spite of Mr Robinson's agreement not to demand regular interest payments.

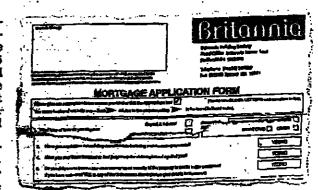
Mr Mandelson said the agreement was that part of the loan would be repaid by the sale of his former property. The remainder was to be repaid upon the sale of the house in Northumberland Place.

According to mortgage mer minister defaulted. experts, loans would normally be considered a "gift" if the lender had waived the right to

delson's arrangement, interest owed to Mr Robinson, at the Midland Bank base rate of 6.25 per cent, would not be repaid but added to the value of the loan. By now, the loan amount has risen to more than £420,000-By 2006 Mr Mandelson would

owe Mr Robinson £683.908. Mr Mandelson said Mr Robinson would also be at liberty to register a charge over the property, giving him the right to force a sale if the for-

A search of the Land Registry for the property in Northumberland Place con-



exercised his right to register mortgage from the Britannia a charge on the property. Building Society placed on the The only charge is for the property in November 1996.

Building Society, placed on the



Dream of following grandfather ends

MILLENNIUM DOME

UNTIL YESTERDAY when peo- By KATE WATSON-SMYTH ple talked of Mandelson's folly they were referring to the Mil-

lennium Dome. Now that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has resigned, the "tacky theme nark" and "white elephant" has lost its most passionate

Peter Mandelson cast himself as the saviour of the Dome. Like his grandfather Herbert Morrison, who master-minded the 1951 Festival of Britain while carrying out his duties as . Clement Attlee's Foreign Secretary, Mr Mandelson wanted to prove that he too could organise a national extravaganza. His political opponents felt

his position conflicted with his duties as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

The Dome will now be overseen by Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, until a replacement can be found. Stephen Bayley, the former creative director of the Dome who resigned this year over political interference in the project and a fall-out with Mr Mandelson, said: "It does amuse me hugely that the year ends with his, I don't want to appear to be gloating but...

Mr Mandelson's role in the Dome was as the holder of the Government's single share in the New Millennium Experience Company, (NMEC) which best Christmas present the organises the project in Green-wich, south London. But his Company could have had. departure raises serious questions over the ability of the private business needed to make the project work. It is also more questionable that the

Dome will be ready on time. Mr Mandelson always maintained he saw no conflict between his political and his Dome roles. The assurance came because he was aware sponsors of the Dome and that the Department of Trade and Industry was one of the bodies due to rule on the possible threat to competitiveness of BA's proposed link-up with

procuring sponsorship contracts for the Dome. "All contracts were handled by the began with my resignation and NMEC in-house sponsorship ends with his I don't want to ap- team," the company said last

But Peter Ainsworth, the Conservative spokesman on culture said: "The news that Peter Mandelson has relinquished his responsibility for the Millennium Dome is the New Millennium Experience

"Ever since Mr Mandelson took control, the project has suffered from allegations of conflicting interest, made worse by his appointment as Trade and Industry Secretary earlier this

Jennie Page, the chief executive of the NMEC, said that despite Mr Mandelson's departure it was business as usual. "He has devoted a great deal of British Airways was one of the time and effort to the Dome, for which everyone here is extremely grateful," she said. The NMEC says it is close to gathering all the £150m sponsorship it needs for the Dome, due to

open on 31 December 1999. Whether Mr Mandelson at-The NMEC, however, intends the celebrations remains to be seen. He has said the involved in negotiating or Dome will be a chance to "reflect on the pride we have in our past and the confidence we have in our future". Unfortunately for him, it may simply provide a chance to reflect on his downfall.

It's a loss for us, too, say the voters of Hartlepool

THE CONSTITUENCY

BY DARIUS SANAI

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THERE HAS always been an irony in Peter Mandelson's choice of parliamentary seat. Since his election to Parliament in 1992, Labour's ultimate moderniser has represented a depressed north-eastern town whose image is the epitome of the traditional Labour Party. But while there is no greater

enmity than between two sides (to the same political party, there was no dancing on the streets of Hartlepool yesterday.

The consensus was that while Mr Mandelson appeared to be the victim of arrogance. the resignation of the local MP from such a powerful position could only be a loss for the town. Philip Ash. 47, a bus driver. said: "It's a shame. He has done

a good job for Hartlepool. I think his resignation is just to please everyone else, there was a lot of pressure on him to quit and it will nlease the Opposition as he is the strength of the party."



Mandelson's other home attracts interest North News

new Labour should in theory be simmering in Hartlepool, but many traditional supporters have been converted by Mr Mandelson's devotion to constituency matters. *Despite being one of the busiest figures in government he doesn't neglect his constituents," said Peter Barron, editor of the Hartlepool Mail. "He has done very well as an MP. He is still

very visible in the town despite all his other commitments. But Mr Barron felt Mr Mandelson was right to resign. "He was in a position where he had

no choice. I just can't believe he could have been so naive. "There will be mixed feeling about the resignation, but this is a traditional working class northern town and the whole that for a Labour MP will be so alien to the people of Hartiepool that most will think fresigna

tion] was the right thing to do.' The ambivalence in the reaction towards Mr Mandelson has deeper roots than Labour Party factionalism. Hartlepool, once a byword for post-industrial desolation, has undergone something of an economic re-covery of late. As Stephen Mc-Cormack, 28, a factory worker, said yesterday: "I thought he should have stuck it out. He has done a lot for Hartlepool."

However, the positive views are not unanimous. Melanie Sonnick, 22. a shop assistant in the town, said: "All he has done for Hartlepool is bring us bad publicity."

Though it will be little consolation to the fallen minister. whose preferred constituency encompasses the cappuccing coves of Notting Hill, it is the ultimate irony that his prompt resignation may actually boost his standing in a town where old

Headlines helped downfall

PRESS REACTION

A CAREER of manipulating the BY PAUL MCCANN media to his advantage came to naught yesterday as newspa-pers united in their condemnation of Peter Mandelson. Downing Street's decision to

accept his resignation yesterday morning was influenced by the vitriol poured on the minister and the Government by the morning's newspapers.

The Daily Mail led the attack, with a front page that screamed "Master of Deception". Its leader likened the minister to Icarus, a man brought down by his soaring de. It condemned government "cronyism" and raised the spectre of Robert Maxwell and his links not just with

Geoffrey Robinson, but with other Labour heavyweights. Even the Labour-support-

ing Mirror weighed in, describing Mandelson's folie de grandeur. "The Government underestimated how it would impact on the public," said editor Piers Morgan yesterday. "They were hoping because he did nothing illegal he would get away with it. The press realised how such a large sum would disgust the public." Under the headline "A crisis of

arrogance and greed", The Mirror also attacked cronyism. The Express led with the

truth", and accused Mr Mandelson of offering only "token regrets". In The Times he was compared to Becky Sharp from the novel Vanity Fair. both have a "flaw" of wanting to "lead the high life on virtually no money".

The Guardian stopped short of calling for Mr Mandelson's resignation, but lamented his poor judgement and reported on the private "glee" of many Labour MPs at his discomfort.

Certain elements recurred in yesterday's coverage. Almost all papers traced Mandelson's rise from a humble cottage to Nineties cool. The other device the same question.

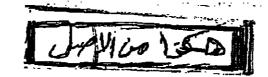
headline "How he hid the no one could resist was com paring his Notting Hill home with those of his constituents. The Mail claimed he could have bought nine bouses in Hartlepool with the borrowed money, The Mirror said it was 30, The Telegraph said it was 36 and The Sun said he could have bought a whole street.

The Sun's front page combined two quotes from Tony Blair speeches: "We are on the side of ordinary people against privilege. We must be purer than pure." If that was so, asked The Sun,"how the hell can Mandy stay?" It seems that after seeing yesterday's his recent status as king of front pages, Tony Blair asked



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- Lampin

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Mickey eclipsed by Disney's own Pooh

"MERRY CHRISTMAS, Pooh!" By ANDREW GUMBEL said Christopher Robin. "You've been such a generous bear, such a kind bear, you deserve pots and pots of honey!" "Oh, thank you!" exclaimed

Pooh as he helped himself to a smackerel. "Mmm," he said, licking his lips. "What a very sweet Christmas this is!" And so the world's favourite

cuddly bear heralds the festive season, surrounded by all his friends from the Hundred Acre Wood. There is snow outside, and Pooh is wearing a Santa hat and scarf. It doesn't sound much like A A Milne. But that's because it isn't A A Milne, except by the vaguest of associations. This is Disney Pooh, a revamped version of the original Bear of Very Little Brain as conceived for the multimedia age, and - to judge by his performance in shopping malls across the United States - a monstrously successful

marketing exercise. Ann Braybrook's seasonal "based on the Pooh stories by slew of spin-offs flying out of the shops and into toddlers' bedrooms this year. At every with Pooh books, Pooh videos. Pooh clothing, Pooh satchels and school bags. Poon sheets, Pooh toothbrush holders and Pooh soap dispensers.

According to Disney, Pooh is from A Bug's Life or Toy Story or The Lion King. He's even bigger than Mickey Mouse.



the number two licensed toy line in America, with only Barbie pipping him to the post. "Pooh belongs to every-

body," says John Singh of Disney's consumer products division in an attempt to explain a phenomenon that has sky-rocketed in just two short years. Mostly his success book The Sweetest Christmas, is a reflection of Disney's extraordinary marketing mus-A A Milne", is just one of a cle and an assiduous corporate courtship that stretches back more than half a century.

As early as the Forties, Walt turn parents are confronted Disney entered tortuous negotiations for the rights to the Pooh menagerie, dealing with both A A Milne's estate and Dutton Publishing, which issued the books in America.

When a deal was eventually bigger than any of its spin-offs struck in 1964. Disney trod carefully, giving up on the idea of a full-length feature and opting instead for a series of

closely to the original stories. From the outset, however,

E H Shepard's illustrations were redrawn as Walt Disney decided, in quintessential Hollywood fashion, that Winnie the Pooh didn't look enough like Winnie the Pooh. No longer Christopher Robin's raggedy bed companion, Pooh became a smiling Californian sort of bear with fur as golden as the honey he so loved to eat.

In time, as Disney invented whole new plotlines to put Pooh on TV, he developed a very West Coast psychobabble sensibility, which involved lots of hugging and affirmations of friendship. He also acquired a skimpy bright red T-shirt that on one less chubby than he might have been accused of looking downright sexy.

For 30 years, Disney subcontracted the merchandising of Pooh to Sears Roebuck but that all changed in 1996.

Disney had developed into a world-class entertainment conglomerate with access to television stations, shops and a string of toy-making contractors kept busy by its neverending series of big screen hits. It took over the merchandising itself and the Pooh machine went into overdrive.

In deference to parents with memories of the original stories, Disney has put out a line of toys called Classic Pooh, which more closely resemble the E H Shepard originals, but to most American kids Winnie the Pooh is Disney Pooh and they wouldn't want him any



Pooh and friends in the Disney cartoons which portray Pooh as a golden, California-style bear, a far cry from E H Shepard's original drawings (top left)

Fury over parole for IRA prisoners

A WOMAN whose parents were killed in a notorious IRA bombing chained herself to a gate at the Maze prison near Belfast yesterday in protest against the release of republican prisoners for Christmas.

Those who were given 10-day parole yesterday included Sean Kelly, the IRA prisoner whose bomb killed both Michelle Williamson's parents. Kelly slipped away, avoiding Ms Williamson, who later said: "Kelly is an even bigger murdering coward than I thought

The incident illustrated the sensitivity over prisoner re-leases, which form part of the Good Friday Agreement. More than 200 permanent releases have already taken place under

Yesterday it was the usual Christmas paroles. Those released were associated with some of the most notorious incidents and darkest days of violence of the Troubles.

Sean Kelly, for example, was himself almost killed in the Shankill Road fish shop attack onated prematurely, killing a colleague and nine Protestant civilians. Other IRA prisoners Magee - or the "Brighton bomber" - who was jailed for the 1984 bomb in the Grand Hotel which killed five people attending the Conservative Party's annual conference.

On the lovalist side, these who will spending Christmas at home include Michael Stone, As part of the conditions for the Ulster Defence Association gunman who killed three people attending a republican uneral in Belfast in 1988, and Johnny "Mad Dog" Adair. Adair, who was regarded as the head of the UDA's assassination

BY DAVID MCKITTRICK Ireland Correspondent

squads, was the IRA's target in the Shankill Road bombing. Under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, all prisoners affiliated to the major paramilitary groups can expect permanent release by mid-2000. While technically they can be recalled to prison at any time, this is considered unlikely except if there is a return to wholesale violence or if they are seen to become involved again in terrorist activity.

Unionist critics of the agreement, together with the Conservative Party, have called for a halt to releases unless the IRA begins to decommission weapons. The Government's position, however, is that the releases were specified in the agreement and have since been endorsed in the referendum.

The Northern Ireland Secretary. Mo Mowlam, said yesterday: "It's not easy to go through the kind of changes that are taking place as a result of the agreement. The accelin 1993, when an IRA bomb deterated release of prisoners is tough, not just for those with families or friends who have been murdered, but I think it's on parole include Patrick bitter for everybody, a bitter pill to swallow."

Opposition to the releases has also come from police representatives on both sides of the border. In the republic, four men convicted of killing members of the Gardai have

As part of the conditions for releases in the north, all prisoners must not make any public comment, appear at any demonstration or involve themselves in any sort of behaviour which could cause distress to victims or victims' relatives.

No charges for Bridgewater Four police

SEVEN POLICE officers who BY IAN BURRELL were alleged to have fabricated evidence that led to the false conviction of the Bridgewater Four are not to be charged by the Crown Prosecution Service.

Solicitors for the Four said yesterday's announcement by the CPS "beggared belief" and even David Calvert-Smith, the new Director of Public Prosecutions, said he appreciated the decision could be seen as "difficult to understand".

Ann Whelan, the mother of Michael Hickey, one of those wrongly convicted, said the CPS action was "horrendous, outrageous, and deplorable". She vowed to fight on.
Supporters of the wrongly

convicted men had expected police officers to face charges after the Court of Appeal raised "grave concerns" last year over the police investigation.

Michael Hickey, Vincent Hickey and Jim Robinson were freed by the court after spending 17 years in prison. Pat Molloy, the fourth man convicted of murdering the newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater, died in prison

Eight detectives - one of

Home Affairs Correspondent

whom has since died - were implicated in the Court of Appeal ruling delivered in July last year over the way Staffordshire Police gathered evidence in the

But Mr Calvert-Smith said there was no realistic prospect of convicting the officers. He pointed out the Court of Appeal had access to material that would not be admissible in a criminal trial.

Allegations focused on claims that Pat Molloy confessed to being at the scene of the crime only after being shown records of a forged interview with co-defendant Vincent Hickey.

James Nichol, the solicitor representing all three freed men, said there was clear evidence against at least two of the officers who had signed statements denying a take interview report had been drawn up concerning Michael Hickey, a fact contradicted by scientific tests proving the existence of the report and which formed the plank of the appeal case.

IN BRIEF

Britons die in Bosnia air crash

TWO BRITISH servicemen were killed on Tuesday when their helicopter crashed in flames near their base in Bosnia, the Ministry of Defence said yesterday. A third crewman was seriously ill in hospital after the Lynx crashed at Gornji Vakuf, 40 miles west of Sarajevo.

Rushdie flight ban lifted

BRITISH AIRWAYS has lifted its nine-year ban on the author Salman Rushdie flying with the airline after receiving assurances from the Foreign Office. The ban was imposed on security grounds when Iran issued a death sentence in response to The Satanic Verses.

Branson balloon heads for Pacific

AFTER LEAVING Chinese airspace, Richard Branson's round-the-world balloon attempt was last night facing a new challenge - crossing the Pacific Ocean. One of his two co-pilots. Steve Fossett, was forced to ditch in the ocean this summer during a separate global ballooning attempt.





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Longer

life for

women

BY STEVE CONNOR Science Editor

childless

PEOPLE WHO are genetically destined to live a long life are

also more likely to have fewer children, according to a study of 33,000 European aristocrats. Scientists who analysed the longevity and family size of aristocrats born between 1740 and 1875 have discovered evi-

dence to suggest that those who

lived longer did so because

their bodies were less suited to

The findings fit in with a the-

ory of Darwinian survival,

which says that some animals

are genetically programmed

to die young and have many off-

spring whereas others are less

Rudi Westendorp, of Leiden

University in the Netherlands,

and Tom Kirkwood, of the Uni-

versity of Manchester obtained

the records of 19.830 male and

13,667 female aristocrats to

compare life spans against the

ages when they had children, in

Professor Kirkwood, a bio-

logicai gerontologist, was test-

ing his "disposable soma

theory", which predicts that

any investment the body - or

soma - makes in ensuring fer-

tility and reproduction is di-

verted away from repairing the

continual damage caused by

the ageing process. This "trade

off" has already been estab-

lished by experiments on fruit-

flies, which show that individual

animals who are genetically

programmed to have a long life

are less fertile than those des-

The scientists found a clear

correlation between extended

longevity and small family size.

Almost half the women who

surpassed 81 had no children,

yet fewer than one-third who

died before this age were child-

less, they report in the journal

"We are not saying those

people who choose to have

fewer children are more likely

to live longer," Professor Kirk-

wood said. "It is not conscious, but a biological trade-off be-

tween having offspring and liv-

tined to die young.

Nature.

ing longer.

addition to family size.

fertile and so live longer.

rearing offspring.

Over Suppliers call for fluoride in water

water supplies moved closer yesterday, as the water industry called for a change in the law to hand over the decision to health authorities.

Water UK, which represents the country's water utility companies, delighted campaigners and medical bodies by suggesting the decision on whether to add fluoride should no longer be made by the water firms and instead be taken on medical, not commercial grounds, after public consultation.

Such a move would almost certainly increase the number of people drinking fluoridated water, which has been shown to cut the incidence of tooth decay. About 10 per cent of the population, 5.5 million people, currently have fluoride added to their water, mainly in the West Midlands and the North East.

Fluoride occurs naturally in all water supplies and in some places, such as Hartlepool, the level is high enough to provide protection. In other areas, where the natural level has been topped up artificially, decay rates have fallen.

Over the past decade, 55 requests have been made by health authorities to water companies to add fluoride but all have been turned down due is on the wall." to fears of legal action by antifluoride groups, who have claimed that fluoridation amounts to mass medication and is in breach of civil liberties.

Last week a judicial review ruled that Northumbrian Water had the right to refuse to extend fluoridation of its supplies under current legislation. The fluoride lobby in government." Government indicated its backing for fluoridation in a Green an independent public inquiry Paper on public health in Feb- into the effects of fluoride in tap ruary, which is to be followed by a White Paper in the new year. fear from that."

FLUORIDATION OF Britain's By JEREMY LAURANCE Health Editor

> Last month, the Acheson report into health inequalities. commissioned by the Government, also called for wider fluoridation. Yesterday, Pamela Taylor, chief executive of Water UK, said the law was a "mess" and reform was overdue.

The 1985 Water Fluoridation Act left responsibility with the water companies. That should be switched to health authorities, who should be required to carry out full public consultation, she said.

She said she had written to Tessa Jowell, the Health minister, seeking an urgent meeting in the new year. "The next step rests with the Government," she said.

The proposal was welcomed by the British Medical Association and the NHS Confederation. Sheila Jones of The National Alliance against Dental Health Inequalities, representing 31 medical, dental and voluntary organisations, said: "The water companies are facing up to the reality that this Government is not going to put up with the industry in the

way the previous one did. "They have seen the writing

Opponents warned that fluoridation can cause discolouration of tooth enamel and have long-term consequences for health. John Graham of the National Pure Water Association said: "I think Water UK will effectively be facilitating the aims of the pro-

He added: "What we want is water. No one has anything to



Doreen Taylor, 66, and her mother, Emily Hayward, 97. When she is not caring for her mother, Mrs Taylor helps Age Concern Andrew Fox

'A smile is the only reward I need'

By Kate Watson-Smyth

AT THE age of 66, Doreen Taylor should be enjoying her retirement and allowing others to look after her. Instead, she spends her time looking after her mother and running a day centre for the elderly.

Mrs Taylor is the warden at the Friends Meeting House in Wolverhampton and, in any spare time, works as a volunteer for Age Concern.

"It takes up all my time but I really enjoy it," she said. "I have never thought of money as the most important thing and the joy on the old people's faces when they come to the day centre or I take them out for lunch is compensation in itself."

Every day at 7.30am she drives to her mother's house, prepares breakfast and dresses her. "It used to be quite quick

to do, but now she is 97 and I am usually there until about 10am," she said.

On Tuesdays she goes home via the market, where she buys food for lunch at the day centre. which opens every Wednesday. We have about 24 people in each week and it is the highlight of their week, because many of them aren't very mobile. I have another volunteer to help and we make them lunch or sometimes take them out in the Age Concern ambulance to the country or to the pub for lunch." At 3.30pm, when the centre

closes, Mrs Taylor cleans up and folds the tables before going home and making tea for herself and her husband, Dennis, 67. Then she returns to her mother's house to give her supper and get her ready for bed. "She stays with me three days a week, which makes things easier, but she is very attached to her little flat and I am determined she will be able to

stay there as long as she wants. "I don't mind looking after her. She did so much for us as children and it seems only right that I should try and repay some of that.

"I like to be busy and I shall keep on doing this as long as I can. I feel proud I can do something to help these people and that's all the reward I need."

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80% of all mones raised through The Independent Christmas Appeal will supported with work that Age Concern England carries out. As the host charity Age Concern England with destribute in equal shares 20% of all funds raised to 51 Christopher Hospice and Action on Elder Abuse (all registered charines)

Action

ON ELDER

ABUSE

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ACTION

ON ELDER

ABUSE

from a bail hostel to which he

was sent after serving eight

Officers told the court they

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tape with him, which appeared Penny Jones, described him as

to have been made during an encounter with prostitutes. Detective Sergeant Chris Lowe, who helped to jail Gor- is necessary in protecting the don in 1988, told the court: "I am under no doubt whatsoever

that Mr Gordon is using peeping activities to target victims." Gordon's probation officer, "cool and calculating".

Mr Berg said: "I have no hesitation in concluding an order public from serious harm from

Wayne Jackson, representing Gordon, said an appeal would be lodged immediately.

Bedsit rapist becomes subject of first legal exclusion order

been banned from visiting parts of Manchester and all the city's universities at night after police "curlew order" to come from a

🐴 The ruling by Alan Berg, a Manchester stipendiary magCrime Correspondent

ments of Michael Gordon, 35, yesterday obtained the first known as the Bedsit Beast after he raped two students at knifepoint. He was jailed for 12 years in 1990 for attacks on the women, aged 20 and 25, after istrate, restricts the move- breaking into their bedsits

while they slept. He had prowled the area at night to seect his targets.

Police told the court yesterday that they had seen Gordon recently looking into windows and wandering the streets in the area where he committed the attacks. They believed he was searching for a new victim.

The court ruled that Gordon and 7am, excepting his home in the subject of a Sex Offenders Order, under legislation that came into force at the beginning of this month.

The civil order, which runs for eight years, bans Gordon from much of the southern part of the city between 10pm

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still posed a risk and made him the Rusholme area, which is inside the "exclusion zone". It also bans him from the premises and grounds of Manchester's three universities. A breach of the order could lead to a maximum five-year jail term.

He returned to the area in March after being released

had seen Gordon peering through bedsit windows at night and then running away shoeless on tip-toe.

years of his jail sentence.

When he was arrested he had a sexually explicit audio

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Israelis hit by revenge blitz

THOUSANDS OF residents of BY ERIC SILVER northern Israel were spending in Jerusalem a second night in bomb shelters last night, after Katyusha rock-ets fired from southern Lebanon rained down on their homes, wounding 13 civilians.

Hizbollah, the Islamic Shia "Party of God" militia, was retaliating yesterday for an Israeli air strike on Tuesday, which killed a Lebanese woman and her six children in the Bekaa valley of eastern Lebanon. Israel apologised for the bombing, blaming the tragedy on technical malfunction or pilot error. The crew, it said, was aiming at a radio transmitter 300 yards away from the woman's home.

Hizbollah, which has been waging a hit-and-run war of attrition since 1985 with Israeli troops occupying a self-proclaimed "security zone" inside

Lebanon, was not appeased. "Once again," it said after yesterday's rocketing, "the

in Jerusalem

resistance has fulfilled its promise to protect our territory

and our civilians. "Violence must be answered by violence. Their blood must

be spilt for ours." According to Reuters, 28 civilians have now been killed in the confrontation this year, almost all of them Lebanese. The guerrillas lost 37 fighters and Israel 20 soldiers in the same period.

The Katyusha surface-tosurface rockets wrecked a bank and houses in Kiryat Shmona, a favourite target for such attacks, and cut electricity sup-plies, but most of the Israeli casualties were light. Anticipating the revenge operation, the army had ordered the population into shelters.

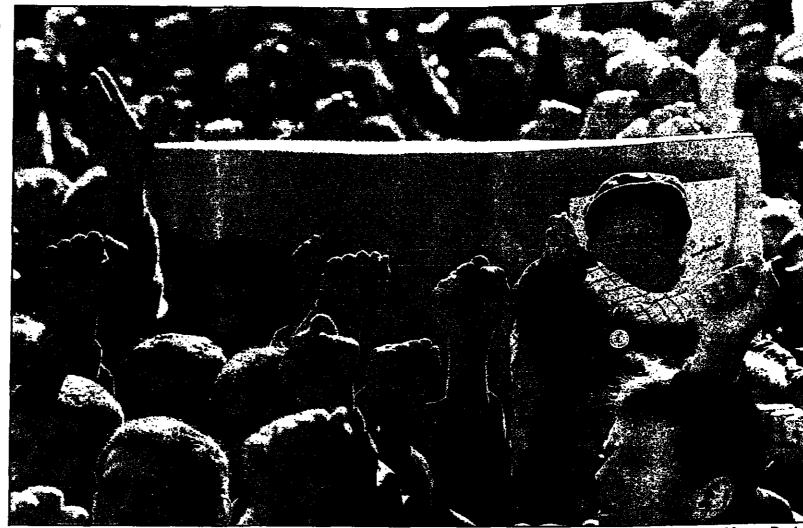
Lebanese security sources said 60 rockets were fired.

"There is tremendous dam-

age to property," Haim Barbivai, Kiryat Shmona's mayor, said. "but the people were in the shelters. We were ready for this situation. The rockets fell at the very hour the children are driven to school. I'm glad they stayed home today."

This week's violence has revived calls in Israel for the government to withdraw the army from southern Lebanon. Yossi Beilin, a minister in the last Labour administration, said yesterday: "There is no need to stay in a security zone that is not ours, which has not succeeded in preventing Katyusha or other problems, or the killing of soldiers."

■ In Gaza yesterday, Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority released Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, from house arrest. Sheikh Yassin was confined to his home on 29 October after one of the group's suicide bombers attacked an Israeli school bus.



A child salutes during the funeral in Baalbek yesterday of a Lebanese woman and her six children killed in an Israeli air raid

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FRONTLINE

O little town of bickering

YASSER ARAFAT, a devout Christmas 1999 and Easter Muslim, hymned it as the birthplace of the Prince of Peace. Bill Clinton came seeking salvation and a First Family photo-op. But the little West Bank town of Bethlehem is on a front line within a front line within a front line, the confrontation zones between Jew and Arab, Muslim and Christian, Rome and

You feel the tension first as you drive in from Jerusalem. five miles away. Armed Israeli troops man a checkpoint. "Prepare all documents," admonishes a sign in Hebrew, Arabic and English. The queue of vehicles is longer

coming out than going in. Rachel's Tomb, much frequented by barren women yearning for children, looks more like a fortress these days than a biblical shrine. lehem just before Christmas three years ago, the tomb remained under Jewish control. but on the fringe of Palestinian territory. The army built a mock-Herodian bastion and

posted more soldiers. Whenever angry young Palestinians want to resurrect the intifada, this is the arena. Rachel's Tomb, where the road forks left into Beth-

lehem, is their front line. The Palestinian police man no checkpoints. Across the divide, it is as if Bethlehem has written off Christmas 1998. Manger Square, once the world's most sacred car park, looks more like the world's most sacred building site. This year has been mortgaged to the millennium.

"Two thousand years ago," boasted the mayor, Hanna Nasser, "a turning point in history took place here." To mark and market the anniversary, the Palestinian Authority is spending \$130m (£78m) of worldwide donations on a facelift. Manger Square is being paved and landscaped, long neglected roads resurfaced. "They'll be lucky if they're finished by 2500," said my Arab driver.

An oppressive stone and ment police station, built by the British in 1938 and manned successively by British, Jordanian and Israel occupiers, has been replaced by a huge hole in the ground. A Nativity museum and peace centre is planned for the site.

Hotels and bostels are going up for the 3 million pilgrims expected between

2001. "Bethlehem." said the mayor, a Catholic business-man, "should be a Mecca for

Christians." The irony was deliberate. Bethlehem is a Christian holy city with a growing Muslim majority. Mr Nasser acknowledged that 65 per cent of his 30,000 citizens are Muslims, only 35 per cent Christians.

The sixth-century Church of the Nativity at one end of Manger Square is echoed by a mosque at the other. Knowing which side Bethlehem's bread is buttered, the Palestinian Authority has decreed the mayor and deputy mayor will always be Christian.

"Christmas Message is Justice and Peace," pro-claims a banner near Nativity Church. "Christ is the Saviour." It is signed: "Fatah, the Palestinian National Lib-Yasser Arafat's power base, is renowned for many things, none of them pacifism or Christian piety.

Inside the church, the third front line is set in stone. It is no accident that midnight mass, televised around the world on Christmas Eve, is relayed not from the Emperor Justinian's Byzantine basilica but from a modern Catholic church built alongside it. In the Holy Land, sites spell status. The tug of war between the Catholic and Orthodox churches goes back at least as far as the Crusades.

"In an extraordinary display of tolerance," wrote the Dominican scholar Father Jerome Murphy-O'Connor in his Oxford guide to the Holy Land, "the Crusaders and Byzantines co-operated in the restoration of the church between 1165 and 1169." Mutual tolerance has been hard to come by ever since.

A few years ago, when the Israelis still governed Bethlehem, rain started pouring through the 12th-century roof. It had been under dispute for a century after the Turks removed some of the lead for ammunition. The churches could not agree who should fix it.

At the request of the Armenians and Catholics, a Jewish official stepped in. hiring a Muslim contractor to coat the roof with white plastic. The Israeli taxpayer footed the £30,000 bill. The Greeks registered their "dismay" at the intrusion.

ERIC SILVER



Ex-Nato chief guilty of corruption

THE FORMER Nato secretarygeneral, Willy Claes, was given three-year suspended jail sentence yesterday at the end of Belgium's biggest political

corruption trial of recent years. Mr Claes and two other former ministers were found guilty after a bitterly fought, fourmonth hearing seen by many as an indictment of the Belgian po-

litical establishment. The three-year suspended jail sentence was handed down by the country's most senior court in Brussels, which conBY STEPHEN CASTLE in Brussels

victed Mr Claes of corrupt dealings in two defence contracts awarded when he was economics minister in the late Eighties.

The court also gave two-year suspended sentences to former defence minister Guy Coeme and the former head of the French-speaking wing of the Belgian Socialist Party (PS), Guy Spitaels. The same sentence was meted out to Serge Dassault, head of France's Das-

was at the heart of one set of bribery accusations. He and Mr Claes were each fined 60,000 Belgian francs (£1,070). Eight other former aides and associates were convicted and received suspended sentences of up to

Although Mr Claes did not benefit personally, the court ruled that he must have known donations to his party were linked to the contracts. It concluded that, in 1988, Mr Claes had to know that when the Ital-

a contract for 46 army belicopters, it was discussing a bribe for the Flemish-speaking Belgian Socialist Party (SP). The presiding judge ruled that, in the Agusta case, "the accusation of passive corruption has

been proven for Willy Claes". He said Mr Claes and others bent the contract rules at the expense of the rival bidder, France's Aerospatiale SA. The court also found that a donation of Bir60m (£1,07m) from Dassault Aviation SA was linked

The Agusta and Dassault bribes were paid to Belgium's Flemish-speaking and Frenchspeaking socialist parties through secret Swiss and Luxembourg bank accounts. In 1989 Belgium outlawed such corporate donations to political

The trial in the 15-judge high court came after the parliamentary immunity of Mr Claes and others had been been lifted. Prosecutors had to prove only that the Agusta and Dasclosely to the awarding of contracts that Mr Claes and the

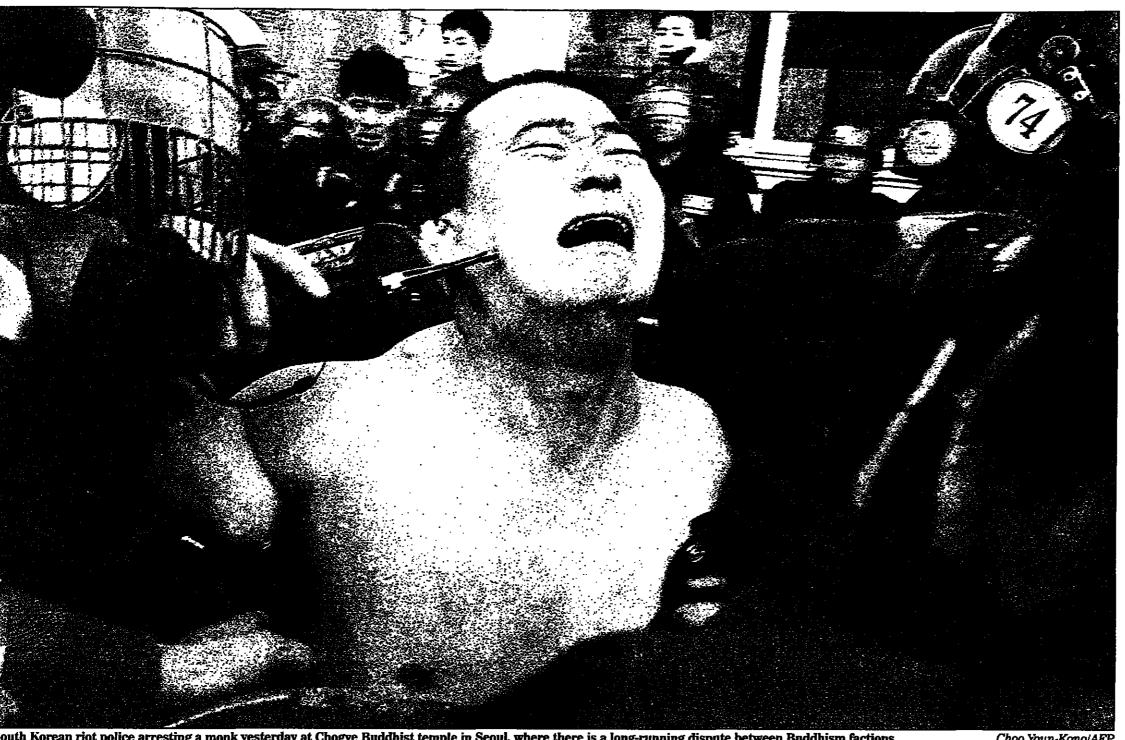
others knew they were bribes. Despite the length of the Agusta-Dassault bearing, it produced little new evidence. It opened in September amid a dispute about whether the huge body of evidence should be translated into Dutch as well as French. The origin of the hearing lies in the murder in 1991 of Andre Cools, a former socialist minister assumed to have known of the financial wrongdoing.

course we received money from companies, but there was never an act of corruption. This truth I will defend until my last breath, if only for the honour of children

and grandchildren." Mr Claes became Nato secretary-general in September 1994 but resigned when the investigation into his role in the Agusta case became increasingly intense. For Mr Coeme. a ncophone Socialist, this was second corruptionrelated trial in two years.



Willy Claes: Bent the rules



South Korean riot police arresting a monk yesterday at Chogye Buddhist temple in Seoul, where there is a long-running dispute between Buddhism factions

Choo Youn-Kong/AFP

Buddhist temple stormed by police

BY ROBIN BULMAN in Seoul

SOUTH KOREAN police raided the headquarters of the country's main Buddhist sect yesterday to enforce a court order against dissident monks who had been occupying part of the temple grounds for more than a month

By the time the raid was over, at least one riot policeman had been rushed to hospital with serious injuries, two monks had slashed themselves and threatened suicide and the temple's administrative building had been scorched.

Police said 18 people. mainly police, were in hospital, while 76, including 53 monks, were arrested. At 4am local time, 6,000 riot police began gathering around the temple. More than 1,000 were in the grounds when the raid began.

Monks occupying the administrative building placed jugs of petrol along the building's ledges and threatened suicide via loudspeakers if the police tried to storm the

The raid was the latest chapter in a violent power struggle in the election of leadership of the Chogye Order of Buddhism. Dissident monks last month drove out supporters of the former leader Song Wol-ju when he announced his candi dacy for a third four-year term. Dissidents said that violated a limit of two terms imposed in 1994. (Reuters)

Jazz singer conquers | Ministers complain to Russia's racial bigotry BBC over Iraq news

BY PHIL REEVES

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, give or take a week or two, Tim Strong had a chance meeting with Aretha Franklin. He was an awkward and unknown 18vear-old, one of nine children from a blue-collar family in 😘 sburg, Pennsylvania. She

was... well, the Queen of Soul. An aspiring musician, with an unusually powerful voice, he was sitting at the piano at a rehearsal studio in New York when Franklin wandered up and asked him to sing. Suddenly overwhelmed by nervousness, he declined. "I made a lot of mistakes back then, and that was one of them," he recalls. Since then, both his nerves

and his career have taken a turn for the better. They have done so in the unlikely setting of the former Soviet Union. where jazz was once banned as bversive, and black artists 🕏re – and still are – few and

After moving to Moscow three years ago, where his wife was posted as a diplomat with the New Zealand embassy. Strong, 45, has become an acclaimed performer who pulls crowds in clubs and concert halls across 11 time zones.

Acclaimed is no exaggeration. Not long ago, 10,000 people turned out to see him in Akademgorodok. The Moscow Tribune newspaper has hailed Strong as "arguably the greatest jazz singer in Russia today". Art Troitsky, a Russian commentator and music critic, says he is the greatest blues performer in the land. "Not since Paul Robeson in the late 1940s has an African-American singer created such a sensation in shat was once the Soviet 11 2n." declared Newsweek.

This is no small achievement in a society where atti-



Tim Strong: Acclaimed across 11 time zones

tudes to race range from ignorance and low-level xenophobia to the rabid views of the small. but growing far right. Abuse and attacks against black foreign students are depressingly commonplace; a few months ago, a US marine was badly beaten by young racist Russians in a Moscow park.

Tim Strong could scarcely have failed to be aware of such problems but he says he has never experienced any threatening instance of racism directed specifically at him. There have, however, been moments of outright crassness: for example, seeing his dreadlocks, Russians tend to ask if he is Whoopi Goldberg's brother.

"People in Russia are just not sensitive to race," he said, sitting in his spacious apartment in central Moscow. "I remember I was in a mafia-type joint and this guy asked me to 'sing those nigger songs. You know the ones,' he said. Songs

like 'Summertime'. "But, you know, I have been walking on this tight rope all my life. I have seen everything from the ignorant but wellmeaning to the downright insensitive on both sides, both black and white. It is just garbage that comes out of clut-

tered minds." Nurtured for years in the jazz, blues and theatre scene of New York, Strong is a protégé of the drummer-vocalist jazzman, Grady Tate. But he has also become something of a pioneer in his own right within a society starved of his kind

For years jazz was banned by Soviet leaders, who regarded it as subversive and a threat to the empire's high art. Music fans were forced to make illicit and primitive recordings using along just fine.

old X-rays stolen from medical clinics. And even relatively late on in the USSR's history, when the Party was relaxing its controls, jazz and rock still had a reputation for being shady, a symptom of Western

As late as 1974, plans to open a new jazz café in Gorky Park foundered because the Communist top brass disapproved, ensuring that Moscow remained without any public place offering live jazz or rock. Even when the cafés began to vibrate to the rhythms of Otis Redding and Aretha Franklin, the Russians - ever fearful that individualism would corrode the principles of Communist collectivity - remained

Hedrick Smith, in his 1975 book The Russians, describes attending a jazz lecture that was illustrated by musical extracts. About 1,000 young people filled the hall. "Not once did a single head bop in rhythm. Not one pair of fingers was snapping or clicking to the music. No feet were tapping. No spontaneous applause broke out. People were studious.

immobile, unexpressive." Some of this retentive apbroach is still to be found even in today's liberated Moscow. "There is a handful of Russian jazz musicians who can truly swing," says Strong. "But for the most part there is still a very austere approach, to put it politely. It is just a rhythmic thing. Black people have taught the world how to swing, but the Russians were so far removed here for so long, that they have

come along the slowest. However, they are making progress. At a recent performance by Tim Strong in Moscow, the crowds, young and old, seemed to be swinging

THE GOVERNMENT has admitted trying to exert pressure on the BBC to toe the line in its coverage of the bombing

Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary, George Robertson, Secretary of State for Defence, and the Prime Minister's spokesman have all contacted the BBC informally to express their "disquiet" about the corporation's reporting of the conflict.

The Government's behaviour echoes similar Conservative complaints about Kate Adie's coverage of the 1986 bombing of Libya. It has been

By Paul McCann Media Editor

criticising the BBC for a lack of "health warnings" on news reports coming out of Bagh-

The corporation, the Government felt, could have done more to tell viewers its reports from bombed sites in the city were subject to Iraqi government censorship.

A Downing Street spokesman said yesterday: "There hasn't been a formal complaint and, if there was one, it wouldn't come from the Prime Minister

in person. But there has been disquiet. Alastair Campbell, Robin Cook and George Robertson have had conversa-

The BBC's chief executive of news, Tony Hall, is believed to have been the target of the Government's pressure.

tions with the BBC."

The government spokesman noted that Sky's reports from the Iraqi capital had made clear they were sent under Iragi restrictions.

A spokesman for the BBC denied any pro-Iraq bias and said all of its bulletins had made clear that reports from

Baghdad were subject to restrictions on where reporters could go.

Meanwhile in Washington the National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger, said the Clinton administration would keep economic pressure on Iraq unless it gets rid of its remaining chemical and biological

"The sanctions regime that has already cost Saddam \$120bn [£73bn] will stay in place without change until there is verified compliance," Mr Berger said in an address at the National Press Club.

Man-hunt traps rail blackmailers

GERMAN TRAIN passengers breathed a sigh of relief yesterday as police announced the capture of two blackmailers who had tried to hold the national railway company to ransom by sabotaging the tracks.

After an unprecedented man-hunt involving Tornado jets, military satellites and hundreds of troops, anti-terrorist units seized one of the extortionists at a Bavarian service station. The suspect, a 46-yearold man from eastern Germany, had turned up to collect

fessed to three attacks last week on rail lines running from Berlin. The extortionists, call-Railways", had placed obstacles on the track. A Swedish freight train was derailed, but no one was hurt. After his capture on Tuesday, the man said he had placed bombs in several railway stations. No bomb was found.

Yesterday morning, a second man was arrested. Police say one of the two held a grudge Investigators say he conagainst the railway company.

DAVID AARONOVITCH



Blair is determined not to drop body parts into the press piranha tank

THURSDAY REVIEW PAGE 3

IN BRIEF Help floods in for Texan octuplets

AS THE world's first surviving octuplets kept up their struggle to survive, the babies' family was inundated yesterday with offers of infant supplies. Doctors at the Texas Children's Hospital in Houston said the children remained in a critical condition, with few signs of change since birth. Their mother, Nkem Chukwu, is recovering from the Caesarean birth of seven of the babies.

US to expel Cuban diplomats

THE US State Department plans to expel three Cuban diplomats at the United Nations in New York for alleged espionage. The department gave the Cuban mission 24 hours to argue against expelling the three but it received no response. The case was connected to the arrest of 10 alleged Cuban agents in Miami in September.

Jail for giving son 'illegal' name

A NORWEGIAN woman was jailed for two days for giving her son a name the authorities did not like. Kirsti Larsen, 46, had refused to pay a fine imposed for choosing the name "Gesher" for her 13th child, born in 1995. Norwegian authorities have a list of approved children's names. Gesher is Hebrew for "bridge".

Banana sentencing put on hold

ZIMBABWE'S HIGH Court yesterday delayed until next month the passing of a sentence on the former president Canaan Banana. Banana, 62. returned to Zimbabwe last week after jumping bail and fleeing to South Africa when he was convicted last month of 11 offences of sodomy.

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

BMW denies merger talks

BMW YESTERDAY denied it had held merger talks with any rival car makers or that it was under pressure from its controlling shareholders, the Qandt family, to seek an alliance. There have been reports linking BMW to a possible merger with its German counterpart Volkswagen

The denial came as fresh speculation emerged in the United States about a possible link-up between Ford and the Swedish car maker Volvo. A Volvo spokesman confirmed that it was discussing the possibility of cooperation with a number of car makers but declined to go into details. Meanwhile BMW said it would take a decision in the next four to five months on a £1bn investment in a replacement for the Rover 200-400 series, which is due to be built at Longbridge in Birmingham

Pendragon takes over rival



PENDRAGON, the car dealership chain, yesterday announced the takeover of its rival Evans Halshaw, in an £83.7m deal which will create the UK's largest motor retailer. The Derbybased company, led by chief executive Trevor Finn (left), launched an agreed 260p-a-share bid for Evans and said it had already received acceptances from

shareholders controlling 33.6 per cent of the group. Evans closed up 5p to 26 $ar{ ext{1p}}$. Pendragon was unchanged at 151.5p.

Body Shop buys German stores

BODY SHOP, the environmentally friendly cosmetics company, yesterday bought out Cosmo Trading, a privately owned firm which runs the franchises on 20 of Body Shop's 73 stores in Germany, the chain's fifth biggest market. Body Shop is paying DM20m (£7.1m) for the chain, which made a profit of DM2.67m in 1997.

Managers to buy Mappin & Webb

THE MANAGEMENT of Mappin & Webb, the upmarket jeweller, was last night poised to buy the company from the Asprey Group for an undisclosed sum. The buyout team, led by the Mappin & Webb managing director Judith Pilkington, was also set to acquire Watches of Switzerland, the Rolex retailer and the pawnbrokers TM Sutton, EA Barker and Nathan & Co, also part of privately-owned Asprey.

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INDICES								
<u>Index</u>	Close	Change C	hange(%)	52 wk bigh	12 wit few Yi	에네(%)		
FTSE 100	5908.80	65,50	1,12	5183 <u>.70</u>	4599.20	3.18		
FTSE 250	4798.00	34.70	0.73	5970 <u>.90</u>	4247.60	4.82		
FTSE 350	2777.80	29.20	1.06	2969.10	2210.40	3.42		
FTSE All Share	2677.23	27,56	1.04	2886.52	2143.53	3.47		
FTSE SmallCap	2044.40	12.80	0.63	2793.80	1834.40	4.11		
FTSE Fledgling	1132.90	6.90	0.61	1517.10	1045.20	0.00		
FTSE AIM	792.20	0.70	0.09	1146.90	761.30	0.00		
FTSE EBLOC 100	986.19	16.08	1.66					
Dow Jones	9144.62	101.70	1.12	9380,20	7400.30	1.64		
Nikkei	13779.45	-373.50	-2.64	17352,95	12787.90	1.06		
Hang Seng	10158.75	-163.81	-1.59	11926.16	6544.79	3.07		
Dax	4951.77	126.39	2.62	6217.83	3833.71	1.73		

INTEREST RATES							
SHORT STERLING	UK 10 YEAR GILT	US LONG BOND					
5.80	4.55	5.20					
5.70	4.50	5 10					
5 60	4.45	5.00					
5.50 T F M T W	T F M T W	490 T F M T W					

MONEY MARKET RATES				BOND YIELDS				
lades.	3 month	Yr chg	1 Year	Yr chg	10 year	Yr dig	Long bond	Yr chg
UK	6.37	-1.31	5.71	-1.98	4.42	-1.79	4.30	-1.87
US	5.25	-0.56	5.06	-0.91	4.75		5.17	
Japan	0.53	-0.20	0.59	-0.12	1.94	0.02	2.61	0.07
Germany	3.37	-0.39	3.18	-0.78	3.90	-1.33	4.81	-1.01

CURRENCIES								
5/£	2.815 DM /€	¥/£						
1.692	2.805	196						
1.670 T F M T W	2.785 T F M T W	194 T F M T W						

	POL	JND			וטט	LAK	
	at Spm	Ciange	Yr Ago		at Spen	حومعد	Yr Ago
Dollar	1,6777	+0.01c	1.6451	Sterling	0.5961	0.00p	0.6078
D-Mark	2.8063	-0.23pf	2.9743	D-Mark	1.6728	-0.19pf	1.7987
Yen	194.78	-¥1.20	215.94	Yen	116.05	-4-0.79	130.58
E index	101.00	-0.10	104.90	\$ index	105.10	-0.30	108.40

OTHER INDICATORS

## -	Close	Çığ	Yr Ago		Indes	Chg	Yr ago	Next Sgs
Brent Oil (51 10.03	0.22	17.01	GDP	115.40	3.00	712.04	Dec_
Gold (5)	285.45	-2.80	294.05	RPI	164.40	3.00	159.61	Dec
Silver (5)		0.00	6.03		Rates			
			- fI-		COLID	ce B	OOK	.st 2500

OURIST RATES

(AUStralia (3)			
Austria (schillings)	19.14	Netherlands (guilders)	3.06
Belgium (francs)	56,28	New Zealand (5)	3.07
Canada (S)	2,5418	Norway (krone)	12.
	0.8043	Portugal (escudos)	278.0
Cyprus (pounds)	10.43	Saudi Arabia (rials)	6.124
Denmark (krone)	8.3054	Singapore (\$)	2.65
Finland (markka)	9.1469	Spain (pesetas)	231.6
France (francs)	2.7353	South Africa (rands)	9.53
Germany (marks)	458.49	Sweden (krone)	13.1
Greece (drachma)		Switzerland (francs)	2.23
Hong Kong (\$)	12.62	Theiland (hobbs)	55.9
Ireland (punts)	1.0956	Thailand (bahts)	49965
indian (rupees)	64.23	Turkey (lirasi)	1.641
Israei (shekeis)	<u>6.5018</u>	<u>USA (\$)</u>	1.04
Italy (fira)	2712		
lipan (ven)	191.64	Rates for indication purpo	ses on

Source: Thomas Cook

6.1247

MPC vote opens way for more interest rate cuts

HOPES OF a new year cut in UK BY LEA PATERSON interest rates were given a boost yesterday after it emerged that the Monetary Policy Committee voted unanimously to reduce rates earlier this month amid concerns about slowing

Eight of the MPC members voted to cut rates by 0.5 percentage points to 6.25 per cent, with Willem Buiter, the Dutch academic, again urging the

committee to cut by 0.75 points. The minutes of December's MPC meeting, released yes-terday, revealed that members was particularly concerned about slowing consumption, refigures, as well as the rapid build-up of stocks.

The weakening domestic economy, combined with slower growth overseas, meant that "the downside risks had increased since the previous

bers believed further interest rate cuts would be required in the coming months to prop up the weakening UK economy, reigniting hopes of another cut in rates in early January.

Until yesterday, a January rate cut had been thought unlikely following the release last week of stronger-than-expected figures for November retail

Adam Cole at HSBC Securities said: "In the absence of these minutes, it seemed sensible to believe the MPC would sit on its hands in January. Now flected in weak retail sales it looks like rates could fall again next month."

Hopes of lower interest rates helped the FTSE 100 share index to close up 65.5 points at 5908.8. Sterling ended the day marginally lower against the German mark at DM2.8095.

The minutes - which give the Numerous committee mem- voting records of each com-

mittee member and a sum- the level that neither depresses mary of the arguments revealed the MPC was split into

three camps. The first, assumed to consist solely of Mr Buiter, believed that an immediate cut more than 0.5 points was justified both by the rapid deterioration of the economy and the low level of rates elsewhere.

The second, thought to include DeAnne Julius, the former chief economist at British Airways, expressed concern that a cut of more than 0.5 points could unnerve the

The third camp, though to consist of Eddie George, the Bank of England Governor, and most of the Bank staff, thought a 0.5-point cut was appropriate. given the data flow during November.

The minutes also reveal that the committee had a detailed discussion about the "neutral level" of interest rates - that is,

nor stimulates the economy. Analysts interpreted this as a recognition by the MPC that the overall stance of monetary policy had been too tight, and speculated that the committee would continue to cut rates.

even if the economic data

improved. Kevin Darlington at ABN Amro said: "The minutes were more about when rates would come down further than whether they [the MPC] had hit the right rate now."

Meanwhile, a survey by the Institute of Management revealed that Britain's managers were gloomy about the outlook for next year. Fifty-five per cent of managers did not expect an early recovery in global economic conditions.

Separate figures from the Credit Card Research Group showed that credit and debitcard spending fell 1.3 per cent

Trade gap respite is only temporary

BRITAIN'S TRADE deficit with £0.5bn from £1.5bn in the prethe rest of the world narrowed in October from record levels in September, although analysts said a recent surge in cheap imports meant the improvement in the trade position was only temporary,

writes Lea Paterson. The UK's deficit on traded goods was a lower-than-expected £1.6bn in October, according to official figures released yesterday, down from £2.5bn in September. Trade in services appeared little affected by the weak international economy, and yielded a healthy surplus of £1.1bn.

The overall trade deficit

vious month.

Brian Wilson, the Trade Minister, said: "These figures suggest the September figures were well out of line and that Britain's exporters are continuing to fare reasonably well in the face of extremely difficult world conditions."

However, most economists were gloomy about the outlook for UK trade, and preliminary indications for November were worse than City expectations. According to the Office for National Statistics, the deficit in traded goods with countries outside the EU widened to £1.8bn in Novemfor October was down to ber from £1.4bn in October.

GEC signs

up for

Greene King backs Wolves' Marston bid

WOLVERHAMPTON & DUDLEY BY PETER THAL LARSEN took a big step towards winning the battle for control of Marston, Thompson & Evershed, the regional brewer, as it clinched a deal yesterday that removes a potential rival bidder from the field.

If its bid succeeds W&D, King the Suffolk brewer, for £20m in underwriting and adabout £80m. In return, Greene King has pledged not to table a rival offer for Marston unless a new bidder enters the fray.

The deal will also bolster

W&D's balance sheet, allowing

it to raise the cash part of its offer. Observers had worried that the bid was stretching W&D's balance sheet to dangerous levels. The news knocked Marston shares, which dipped 8p to 287.5p. Greene King rose 2p to

517.5p. W&D shares rose 6p to

422.5p, taking the value of the

group's cash and shares bid to 281p per Marston share. "This is good news for everyone except Marston, and percent by Wolves would probably be acceptable to most investors," said Nigel Popham, an analyst at stockbrokers

Teather and Greenwood But Marston immediately hit back at W&D, suggesting the sale would incur a capital poor deal driven by a need for

cash," a spokesman said. Earlier this month shareholder pressure forced Marston to abandon a plan to sell 569 tenanted pubs in a securitisation deal with Nomura, the financial group. will immediately sell 170 of Aborting the deal is believed to Marston's pubs to Greene have cost the company up to visers' fees. Ralph Findlay, W&D finance

director, said Greene King had approached the company about selling the pubs after the initial bid was launched. He said the 170 pubs were outside the Granada and Tyne-Tees television areas where most W&D pubs are based. "Our focus is on running the pubs and brands in a geographical area where we have a strong presence," he said.

Under the deal, Greene King will buy 100 tenanted pubs and 70 managed pubs for about £80m if W&D takes control of Marston. The pubs. which are scattered across the an increased bid of around 10 South of England, made operating profits of about £8m on turnover of £36m in the year to September. "When Wolverhampton

launched their bid we had a variety of options open to us, one of which was a counterbid," said Tim Bridge, Greene King gains tax charge and dilute the chief executive. "This opporgroup's earnings. "This is a tunity to buy made a lot of



sell 170 Marston pubs to Suffolk brewer Greene King

Kiran Bradley/Page One

\$3bn Euro **space** merger By PETER THAL LARSEN

GEC YESTERDAY took time out from negotiating the restructuring of the European defence industry to sign a merger creating the first pan-European space group.

The deal, bringing together the space operations of four of Europe's largest groups, creates a company with 11,000 employees and annual revenues of more than \$3bn

It will be by far the largest space company in Europe, capable of taking on US players such as Lockheed Martin and Boeing.

GEC is participating through Matra Marconi Space, its joint venture with the French aerospace group Lagardere. Dasa, DaimlerChrysler's aerospace division, and Italy's Finmeccanica will also be contributing their space operations to the new company. The companies did not say how holdings in the new company would be divided between the four owners.

The deal, expected to be completed next year, marks the end of two years of negotiations aimed at matching the consolidation in the US aerospace and defence industry. However, it excludes Alcatel Space, a joint venture including the French defence electronics group Thomson-CSF.

The new company will be one of only two in the world capable of offering a complete range of space operations.

Armand Carlier, now chief

executive of Matra Marconi Space, will become the first chairman of the board of directors of the new company. Each participant will appoint two members to the board.

In a joint statement, GEC and Lagardere said the new company aimed to capture a major share of the growing market for space-based commercial telecoms systems.

GEC and Finmeccanica yesterday also formalised their joint venture in missile systems and air traffic control, Alenia Marconi Systems, which will have estimated sales of £1bn.

SFA expels five members for rule breaches

Authority, the stockbrokers regulator, yesterday expelled five members and suspended one for separate breaches of its

Andrew Gibson, a trader formerly employed by Refco Overseas Ltd, entered into a series of artificial transactions in early 1997 to boost his desk's six-month profit figures, thereby inflating the bonus pool in which he had a 40 per cent

THE SECURITIES and Futures BY ANDREW VERITY

Mr Gibson, who has been dismissed by Refco, was expelled from the SFA, barring him from working as a trader. He was ordered to pay the SFA's costs of £4,400.

Andrew Peter Evenden, a former trader at Bank Boston NA, was expelled for concealing losses on his book by mismarking positions between October 1996 and September 1997. He must pay SFA costs of

Frank Ntim, a deputy manager at Ghana Commercial Bank, was expelled and fined £5,200 for failing to co-operate with SFA demands for details of his bank accounts. Mr Ntim had misappropriated £5,202.46 from a dormant account holding interest monies belonging to his employer. He must pay SFA costs of £2,000.

Philip Penner, a derivatives trader at CSFB (Europe), was costs. suspended for building up a

short futures position significantly in excess of his trading limits without authority. Christopher

Sanders, a former employee of Falcon Securities UK, carried out unauthorised personal account dealings and rebooked profitable transactions from client accounts to one maintained for his own benefit. The SFA expelled him and

ordered him to pay £5,000 to its The individual fines came on

manded. The fine related to widespread failures in reconciling

the same day that Albert E

Sharp, the private client stock-

broker, was fined £200,000 by

the SFA and severely repri-

dividends and stock in the year to August 1997. Clients failed to receive payments correctly and on time

and Albert E Sharp paid compensation for loss of interest. The company must pay £12,500

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON HOPES OF a New Year base rate cut

helped shares to turn in an impressive performance although trading was thin. Footsie jumped 65.5 points to 5,908.8, its first closure above 5,900 since July. Supporting shares were also strong. Marks & Spencer rallied a further

9.25p to 417.75p, despite the most savage profit downgrading yet to appear. A small brokerage, Seymour Pierce Butterfield, suggested this year's profits would fall to £760m; last year M&S produced £1.2bn. Derek Pain, page 13 NEW YORK

SHARE PRICES on Wall Street were sharply higher in late morning trade, helped by heavy buying of technology stocks. although volumes were light. The Dow Jones was up 112

points at 112.26 at lunchtime, shrugging off the news that the US economy expanded at 3.7 per cent in the third quarter, slightly slower than the forecast 3.9 per cent forecast rate. The technology sector was boosted by heavy interest in Internet

FRANKFURT

GERMAN SHARES climbed sharply in thin trading on the last day before a four-day Christmas break The DAX index closed 126.39 higher at 4,951.77 and traders were talking confidently of reaching 5,250 next week. DaimlerChrysler was more than 2 per cent higher at DM157.80, BMW was up almost 4 per cent at DM1,255 and VW

gained over 3 per cent to DM135. Banks and retailers also forged ahead, with Dresdner Bank up over 2 per cent and Commerzbank not far behind.

PARIS

TURNOVER WAS low on the Paris Bourse but prices were marked up and the CAC-40 index ended 51.95 higher at 3.872.42. Shares eased initially after

overnight news that Bouygues Telecom's losses will be above expectations, but Bouygues closed just 11 lower at Fr1.140 as the market rallied. AXA-UAP shed 5 to Fr785 after recent gains, but banks extended their runs. Oil stocks reversed early

MILAN

SHARE PRICES closed higher in Milan, helped by Wall Street's early gains and the expectation that the Bank of Italy would cut interest rates, which was confirmed after the market closed when the official discount rate was cut from 3.5 per cent to 3 per cent. The rate cut will take effect on 28 December, bringing Italy in line with the other Euroland countries.

The Mibtel index closed 331 points or 1.46 per cent higher at 23.064, while the Mib30 rose 531 to

Maysia (ringgits)

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Mandelson and the Ministry of Sorrows

WHEN PETER MANDELSON was appointed Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in July this column said he would not last very long. That was not to denigrate his abilities or doubt his capacity to handle the brief Rather, it was a recognition of the fact that the Department of Trade and Industry has become the most accident-prone department in

Some departments serve as as springboards for ministerial careers. Others act as graveyards. The DTI fits firmly into the latter category.

The last Conservative government got through 13 Trade and Industry Secretaries in the space of 18 vears. Tony Blair is now on his third in 20 months. Scant surprise that it has earned the soubriquet of the Ministry of Sorrows.

Two of Mr Mandelson's predeessors also left the DTI with the whiff of scandal in the air. Leon Brittan was forced to resign over the Westland affair and Cecil Parkinson over an affair of the more familiar

Others simply disappeared into the political wilderness, John Biffen went from being "semi-detached" to being completely detached. And who remembers Paul Channon's tenure at 1 Victoria Street, much less



HARRISON

The last government got through 13 Trade Secretaries in 18 years. Tony Blair is on his third in 20 months

those of Patrick Jenkin or John Nott? Peter Lilley is remembered for the Lilley Doctrine, which stipulated that no state-owned foreign company should be allowed to buy a British company. Although it was popular with Mr Lilley, it was ignored by everyone else, including the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Michael Heseltine (whom Mr Mandelson, incidentally, described recently as one of his political heroes; struggled manfully with

Memo to Mandy: Keep your coat on

صكدًا من الملصل

Our advice to Mr Mandelson in the Outlook column of 28 July, after he became Secretary of State

be remembered for something he failed to do: privatise the Post Office. Lord Young arrived at the DTI with a reputation as the minister who brought Mrs Thatcher solutions while everyone else brought her problems. He sold Rover for a song to British Aerospace and tried to einvent the DTI as the Department for Enterprise but he too failed to

leave a lasting impression. In truth, the only politician who has left his mark indelibly on the DTI was Sir Keith Joseph, and that was by inventing privatisation and thus reducing the DTI to a shell of its former self. When Nicholas Ridley arrived a decade later he asked terrified officials exactly what the department was for as he breezed through its revolving glass doors.

That remains a very good question. Mr Mandelson was in the job the portfolio for three years, only to for just four months and 26 days (an

even shorter tenure than that of Cecil Parkinson). And yet in that brief space of time he had begun to mould the DTI in his own image. With the patronage of Mr Blair, he set about recreating the DTI as one of the great economic departments state. Mr Mandelson's efforts culminated last week with the publication of his Competitiveness

White Paper. The document introduced us to the Mandelsonian vision of a "knowledge-driven economy," where entrepreneurs would become the lifeblood of Britain and enterprise would no longer be a dirty

Although the DTT's budget is a fraction of what it once was, Mr Mandelson reckoned that with an extra £1.4bn for science, a spot of pump priming here and a taskforce there, the DTI could be in the vanguard of

the move to that new economic landscape.

Of course, the White Paper was also an attempt to wrest back the high ground from Gordon Brown, whose dislike of Mr Mandelson is well documented and whose determination to marginalise the DTI is

Most recently the two Cabinet ministers had fought tooth and nail over proposals to give the Post Office more commercial freedom in the face of fierce Treasury opposition. Finally the Prime Minister was called on to intervene, but not before Brown aides had dismissed Mr Mandelson's package of reforms as "garbage and rubbish". With Mr Mandelson gone, his Competitiveness White Paper will probably be consigned to the dustbin like those of his predecessors.

In choosing Stephen Byers to re-

place Mr Mandelson, Mr Blair has wapped someone who cannot fill in a mortgage application properly for someone who cannot multiply seven times eight properly. But that apart,

little else is likely to change. Mr Byers is every bit the archmoderniser and archetypal Blairite that his predecessor was. The light regulatory touch will surely remain, as will the pro-competition, probusiness stance that the DTI adopted under Mr Mandelson. On Fairness at Work and the minimum wage, Mr Byers is unlikely to be any more accommodating to the trade

unions than his predecessor. The in-tray contains one or two hot potatoes. Mr Byers will have to rule on whether Rupert Murdoch should be allowed to buy Manchester United But at least his task is not complicated by being a close friend and neighbour of Mr Mur-

to decide whether the RAC should be allowed to sell its roadside ser-£35,000 windfalls to its members. At some point too, Mr Byers will have to decide when the coal industry can stand on its own two feet and the construction of gas-fired stations can resume (the one real blot on Mr Mandelson's otherwise impeccably business-friendly record).

But his real task will be to rebuild confidence in a department where morale has once again hit rockbottom. For two decades now, its officials have struggled to adjust to one quick-fire change after another in style, policy and personnel. It has sapped the will and weakened the resolve. Moreover it has resulted in the DTI being held in low esteem by the business community.

As for Mr Mandelson, he will need his little black book and his famed contacts more than ever now. His skills are lost to the DTI forever but who would bet against his political return after a suitable period of rehabilitation? Like one of his "exotic" predecessors at the DTL Mr Mandelson could prove himself as much the comeback kid as Cecil Parkinson was for the Conservatives. Minus, of course, the love child.

IN BRIEF

Rio Tinto wins Australian mine

A CONSORTIUM led by Rio Tinto yesterday paid \$226.5m (£141m) to win control of Australia's largest thermal

coal mine. The group, which includes Electric Power of Japan and the Australian pension fund UniSuper, bought a 31.4 per cent stake in the Blair Athol pit in Queensland from Atlantic Richfield. Rio Tinto now

holds 71.3 per cent.

Banner buyout

BANNER HOMES, a small

housebuilder, agreed to a

led by finance director

£22.9m management buyout

Richard Werth. The buyout

team, backed by venture

per share, a 23 per cent

premium over Tuesdav's

yesterday to close at 140p.

Malaysia eases

MALAYSIA IS to ease some of

the capital controls imposed

ng the financial mark turmoil in September, a gov-

ernment official confirmed

yesterday, but they are un-

likely to be scrapped alto-

The government is to

modify the rule banning for-

money out of the country for

"exit tax" that would favour

short-term. The government

has also approved a deal al-

vestors to sidestep currency

Kuala Lumpur's stock ex-

change rallied on hopes that

at least a year. Instead the

government may levy an

long-term investors over

lowing some foreign in-

eign investors from taking

close. The shares rallied 22p

capitalist 3i, offered 145.3p

Footsie catches festive spirit to surge over 5,900

SHARES WERE in celebratory mood again, with Footsie scorag a 65.5-point gain to top 5,900 for the first time since July. Hopes of another interest-rate cut in the new year and continuing New York ebullience helped sentiment.

The festive upsurge has taken the index into areas which seemed out of bounds only a few weeks ago. In the past seven trading sessions it has surged 374.4 points, bringing into sight the 6,000 Footsie forecasts common at the start

whind you, much of the progress has been achieved ters are away, preparing for their seasonal festivities. There is often a temptation for those left minding the shop to take what they see as precautionary actions which - in the thin trading conditions prevailing have an exaggerated impact on

Footsie is not far from the

CELEBRATED, running the Chili's restaurants, could be in profit this year, says broker Beeson Gregory. The company reported a

half-year £666,000 loss, but analyst Ian Berry sees profits of £200,000 for the year to March. The Chili's chain is being extended to five and the Starvin Marvin restaurants turned round. The shares are 6.75p against 21p two years ago.

6,179 peak hit in July Such a display would have appeared laughable when wild rumours of a banking crisis and other bearish influences pressed the market to a year's low of 4,599.2 in October.

For once the rest of the market joined in the romp of the Footsie overlords. The mid cap index rose 34.7 points to 4,798, albeit still a long way off its 5,966.5 peak in June. And the small cap index rose 12.8 to 2,044.4 against its 2,792.7 high.

Tips for the new year - real and rumoured - played a part
the market advance, although suspicions that more big bids would arrive early in 1999 also helped sentiment.

Rentokil Initial, the envionment group thought to be itching to make a corporate strike, rose 15.75p to 458.75p, a peak. It is known to have looked at Compass, but the strength of the contract caterer's shares, firm at 679.5p providing a capitalisation of £4.7bm, could make it too big to swallow.

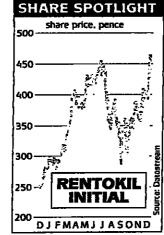
British Petroleum flared 23.5p to 902p. The Amoco merger has still to be cleared, but an



PAIN

announcement is expected shortly. Many tracker funds pation of BP's emergence as Footsie's biggest constituent. But others have, for various strike. reasons, been forced to delay their buying: once the deal goes through they are expected to chase BP.

Marks & Spencer made further headway, up 9.25p to 417.75p. But retail expert Richard Ratner, at a small stockbroking firm, Seymour Pierce Butterfield, moved profit forecasts to a new low - he is shooting for only £760m, cutting by £40m. He said Marks last



week experienced poor trading, exacerbating supply problems. The chain's stockpile was growing and many goods will have to be sold at knock-down prices

This week SG Securities cut its Marks estimate from £860m to £805m, and Teather & Greenwood went from £860m to £785m. Last week Henderson Crosthwaite moved from £850m

Shares of little retailer Cadoro go from bad to worse. The chain, which has admitted trading problems, fell 0.25p to just 0.5p. The shares were 7.5p early this year.

General Electric Co's latest European joint ventures lifted the shares 6p to 543.5p as the cat-and-mouse defence companies alliance game became even more confusing.

There was a spate of bid activity among second liners, with some deals emerging through the rumours. BCH, a vehicle management group, accelerated 28.5p to 246p as Deutsche Bank mounted a 250p cash offer, house builder Banner Homes put on 22p to 140p when a management buyout at 143.5p appeared; and Vision, a digital camera chip maker, added 13p to 58.5p on the STMicroelectronics offer Car dealer Evans

lowing the Pendragon offer. Goldsmiths, the jeweller, sparkled 52p to 164p after what it described as a "very prelim-Bros smartened 16.5p to 150p on rumours of an Arcadia

Halshaw rose 5p to 261p fol-

Marston Thompson & Evershed, the brewer, fell 8p to 287.5p once it became clear that Greene King, the East Anglian brewer, would not take on the white knight role. Greene King has agreed with hostile

LAST WEEK'S unsolicited and rejected bid for Avon Rubber - flat at 555p - may have led a major group to take a look at the maker of parts largely for the

automotive industry. The shares have bounced back from their low of 394p. but the group's impressive record, with profits hitting £26.4m last year, is likely to be deflated: profits of about £24m are expected.

bidder Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries to buy 170 Marston pubs for £80m if its offer goes through. Marston has bitterly resisted Wolves' £262m offer, but it now looks as though it may have to capitulate if Wolves can find the cash to top um its offer.

IT recruitment group MSB International continued its remarkable run following an unbeat trading statement, gaining 32.5p to 282.5p. ISA International jumped 8p to 42p as director David Heap took his stake to 22.1 per cent, and John Foster, giving up textiles to concentrate on property, fell 3.25p

to 6.75p. Tepnel Life Sciences softened 1.5p to 13.5p following the surprise departure of chief

executive Simon Douglas. Derby, a building materials group, fell 10p to 33.5p on a profits warning, and William Nash's failure to hang on to a key German contract left the shares 12.5p off at 142.5p.

SEAQ VOLUME: 477 million SEAO TRADES: 43.077 GILTS INDEX: 115.5 +0.55

The Thomas Cook chain is set to become part of Europe's largest holiday group

Preussag books into Cook

THOMAS COOK last night looked set to become part of Europe's largest holiday group after the German conglomerate Preussag announced plans to buy a majority stake in the UK travel company.

The deal will lead to the formation of a tourism giant with turnover of over £4.6bn a year and more than 1,400 shops serving almost 10 million package travellers a year.

The Hanover-based giant yesterday put an end to months of speculation and announced that it had bought a 24.9 per the Sunworld and Flying scupper the Carlson deal.

By Francesco Guerrera

cent holding in Thomas Cook from its German owner, Westdeutsche Landesbank. Preussag, which shed its

steelmaking business and has transformed itself into an industrial and tourism group. said it would increase its stake to 50.1 per cent by September if the deal received regulatory

Financial details of the acquisition were not disclosed as Thomas Cook, the owner of Preussag's interest would not

Colours tour operators, is not listed on the stock market. However, City analysts said Preussag could have paid up to £280m for the initial stake and was expected to shell out a sim-

UK company. The deal comes two months after Thomas Cook's decision to merge its worldwide business with the UK activities of the US leisure group Carlson.

Sources close to the company yesterday said that

They added that at the end of the complex web of transactions, Thomas Cook will be majority-owned by Preussag, with Carlson and WestLB sharing the remaining 49.9 per ilar amount to win control of the cent.

The German bank will retain significant influence through its minority holding in the new group and its 33 per cent stake in Preussag.

The new-look Thomas Cook will be headed by John Donaldson, an insider who is due to become chief executive of the UK company in January.

the easing may tempt back foreign investment. **Daiwa rating cut**

DAIWA BANK has had its credit rating cut to junk bond status by the credit agency, Standard & Poor's. Six other major Japanese banks. including Sumitomo Bank, also had their ratings cut. Standard & Poor's said most of the banks were facing mounting bad debts and

"substantial" net losses. Electra funding

THE PRIVATE equity group, Electra Fleming, said yesterday it provided the funding for the buyout of Safety-Kleen Europe from its US parent Safety-Kleen Corporation. Safety-Kleen supplies parts cleaning and spray-gun cleaning for the automotive and industrial markets in Europe and provides waste collection services.

Pepper Laporte warns of sales pockets slowdown in chemicals £5m from BCH bid

BCH VEHICLE Management, bought out by its management three years ago and floated 12 months ago, has accepted a £40m bid from Deutsche Bank subsidiary ALD AutoLeasing, writes Clifford German.

Richard Pepper, the chief executive who led the buyout, will receive £5m in cash for his 12.61 per cent stake plus an undisclosed sum for his share

Shareholders include NatWest Bank, HSBC, Robert Fleming and BAT, all of which backed the 1995 buyout. The bid is worth 250p a

share, 47.5 per cent above the 169.5p close on 25 November when BCH revealed it had received an approach. It values the company at £39.6m compared with £31.6m when it floated at 200p a year ago. Shareholders will receive a fur-

ther interim dividend of 5p. The Bristol group includes AutoChoice, a personal contract purchase scheme, and conventional contract hire, leasing and fleet management services. It operates 16,000 vehicles on behalf of 700 companies.

The bid price is about 15 times forecast earnings of 16.5p in the year ending next week. Senior executive directors will stay with the company, to be renamed DB Vehicle Solutions.

LAPORTE, the chemicals group By Francesco Guerrera

undergoing a major overhaul. yesterday revealed slowing sales and warned that its major markets had deteriorated. In a trading statement the

company, which is selling noncore businesses to focus on specialty chemicals, said market conditions were "more challenging than six months ago". The slowdown was particu-

larly harsh in the electronics division, which makes chemicals for computer microchips. Jim Leng, chief executive,

said the business had had a a very tough time as the semiconductor industry suffered its biggest downturn in 30 years. Second-half profits in the division, which accounts for 10 per

cent of group sales, would experience a "material reduction", the statement said. However, Mr Leng expects Laporte to meet analysts'

expectations of annual profits of £130m, thanks to a good showing by specialty chemicals. Sales in the division, boosted by August's £600m purchase of Inspec, were helped by strong demand from the drugs sector.

The company announced the sale of its hygiene division to its management for £31m. The money will be used to reduce Laporte's debt mountain which stands at around £500m

Mr Leng said the company was not under huge pressure to bring down its borrowings as interest cover stood at a comfortable 4.5 times.

He said the sale was consistent with his strategy of exiting non-core business. The division would have needed further investment as the European market for hygiene products was very competitive and very fragmented.

"You can't stay in non-core businesses where you have to keep acquiring to fill geographical and product gaps." he said.

Laporte shares rose 0.5p to 464p yesterday.

Goldsmiths soars on bid talk

SHARES IN Goldsmiths, the jewellery chain, shot up from 112p to 164p yesterday, after the group confirmed it had received a "very preliminary approach" which could lead to a bid.

Analysts suggested a trade sales increases in the run-up to sale to a large store chain or bid the crucial Christmas period. from rival jeweller Signet, but no Analysts have only slightly trimmed their profit forecasts hot favourite emerged. Goldwhile still projecting a modest smiths has resisted the gloom that has overtaken most high overall increase. But the shares street retail chains from Marks have been badly affected by the & Spencer down. market shake-out. Earlier this

280p and even after yesterday's BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

rebound the market capitalisarunning 10 per cent ahead of tion is still under £39m. Five leading shareholders, in-1997 levels and Jurek Piasecki. cluding M&G Investment Manthe chairman and chief executive, has continued to predict

agement, control 23 per cent of the shares and the directors a further 13 per cent. Last year the chairman and chief executive set out an ambitious target of doubling the size of the business by expanding the distribution and office facilities and embarking on a programme to open 15 new outlets a year. Earlier this year sales were year the shares were trading at

Shareholders last year also approved an ambitious incentive scheme for the directors, which required them to increase earnings per share by 100 per cent over five years if they are to receive any benefit and by 150 per cent to derive the maximum

The base for the calculation is 15.3p a share in 1996. Earnings rose to 19.1p in the year to 31 January 1998 and analysts still expect 21.5p in the current year rising to 25.3p next year.

COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	X-d
Cizauser Holdings (1) Contant Commercial (1) John Foster & Ca. (1) Integryath Asset Mpf (1) ***	- (-) 0.955m (-) 2.97m (4.48m) (-) 72.338m (67.472m) (-)	-0 467m (4.813m) 0.413m (-) -0.566m (0.017m) -0.040m (-) 3.170m (2.976m) 0.245m (0.233m)	-2.1p (15.2p) 7.4p (-) -5.0p (0.3p) -1.52p (-) 64.8p (54.9p) 10.90p (10.38p)	1.0p (1.55p) - (-) - (-) - (-) 21p(20p) - (-)	-	-

(F) - Final (i) - Interior

SPORT

Football's Christmas spirit was all humbug

WELL IT'S that time of the year again, chestnuts roasting on an open fire, holly and jingle bells,

Yo, ho, ho, and all that jazz. A time to remember, which someone on radio was up to the other night, recalling when League football was played on Christmas Day in a jovial atmosphere of back-slapping goodwill to all men.

He had to be kidding. What some of us call to mind, everyone who was then employed in the game, is 11am kick-offs on Christmas morning: long, jolting journeys on steam trains to fulfil return fixtures the next day; the cheerless waiting rooms of deserted railway outposts, feuds



carried over, nursing injuries in heatless carriages, dry curledup sandwiches washed down with a bottle of ale.

Because witless administration had yet to see the sense

Christmas, many teams covered hundreds of miles to play each other twice in 24 hours. Often, the results were ridiculous too. Frequently, home defeats were turned around on

chaotic Christmas arrangements but the results of premature festive celebration. A personal favourite concerns a normally abstemious winger whose equilibrium on Christmas morning was sorely disturbed by a fall from the straight and narrow. Able to conceal this from stern management but fearful of disgracing himself on the

When his centre in the final minute led to an own goal that won the match, still finding it difficult to distinguish clearly between friend and foe, he proffered a congratulatory Old players speak not only of hand to the culprit. A punch, unseen by the referee, left him flattened in the back of the net.

Cautions, never mind sendings-off, were rare in those days but cursing in the earshot of some referees on Christmas Day could bring down retribution. My father discovered this in a match controlled by Stanley Rous, the schoolmaster who was knighted after

secretary of the Football Association and later president of the game's governing body, Fifa. In Rous's view my father's exclamation of "Jesus Christ" on a holy day justified a booking for blasphemy.

Probably because Christmas is associated with snow it usually brings me around to thinking about Sulky Gowers. Sulky, who ran a small night-club in the West End of London to which footballers were drawn in the long ago, hated snow. He loathed it almost as much as racecourse stewards and people who tried to put the arm on

and put up the cost of carnations for his button-hole. When it snowed and the damn stuff settled, nothing much happened in sport, which was a problem for Stilky, who claimed that denials of his gambling instinct brought on a headache. Sulky hadn't

Sulky was exceedingly fond of footballers. He was fond of you to give up the game. Take winning jockeys too, but footballers were his favourites.

suffered a headache since he

was 10 years old.

In the days when greyhounds ran around Stamford Bridge there was a cafe across from the main entrance where the Saturday evening before one Christmas he was taking tea there when a prominent London footballer crossed the threshold.

"How did you get on?" Sulky asked, warming his hands around a large cup, and with a wary eye on the weather because he smelt snow. "Lost 4-1," the footballer growled. "Listen," Sulky said. "I want a six months course in

etiquette and be my butler." One New Year's Eve Sulky was in a London pub with a group that included the former Arsenal inside forward Jimmy Sulky held court before the Logie, who was criminally

in playing derby matches over field, he begged not to be given becoming an autocratic remain upright on a gammy leg commencement of racing. On passed over by Scotland for all Christmas many teams over the bell Sulky was standing on a table singing one of his favourite refrains when a man he had conned in the guise of a solicitor, entered the premises. "Sulky, Sulky, give it a rest," one of his friends said, "look who's here." "So what?" Sulky

replied. "Can't a solicitor sing?" Like Sulky, the sound of supporters tramping to matches on Christmas morning has long gone. Doubtless, the majority now are astonished to hear of it happening. As for today's pampered beroes, the worst they can expect is the rotten inconvenience of a training session.

Plenty of faith left in Saint Matthew

Le Tissier has been through thick and thin at The Dell and he has no intention of giving it all up now. By Nick Harris

MATT LE TISSIER will never forget 12 February 1997. There were five than this. And we're not a worse minutes to go to half-time at Wembley, and England were 1-0 down to France 98 qualifier. David Batty leave an open net. Le Tissier rose to meet the ball and Glenn Hoddle want to be the centre of attention. On leapt to his feet in the Royal Box, a football pitch, I'm arrogant, in Saint had paid off. The header flew that's as far as it goes. I'd hate to narrowly wide and Le Tissier's Eng- think that when I come off the footland career was effectively over.

Fast forward to the canteen at gant person, because that's not me." Southampton's Marchwood training ground on a wet winter Tuesday. Mark Hughes is eating a jacket potato at the next Formica table, while Le Tissier is reflecting on a start to this domestic season that saw seven defeats and a draw in Southampton's first eight games, and, despite a brief rally, his team firmly rooted at the bottom of the

"There were a lot of changes very quickly [this summer] and it took a while for people to settle in," Le Tissier said. "But we didn't expect it to be that bad." It had, be added. taken some time to adjust to changes including the departure of Kevin Davies and the arrival of Hughes, Stuart Ripley and David Howells. "It was a very dodgy start and we've given ourselves a lot of work to do. But we're up for it."

When talking about the route to survival, which starts on Saturday at The Dell against Chelsea - unbeaten in 17 matches and with more than a touch of the Italian about them, including Zola - Le Tissier's voice has a levity that is not so much nonchalance as enlightened calm.

"We've been in a lot worse situations team than we were last season." As the scorer of more than 200

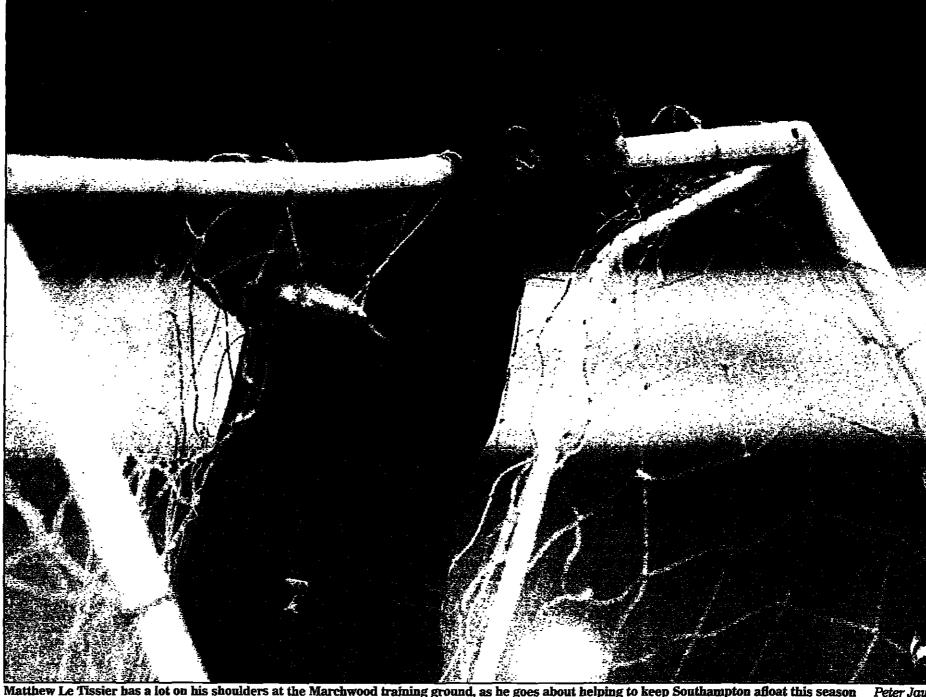
a Gianfranco Zola goal in a crucial goals (many of them crucial in relegation scraps) in nearly 500 ap-Soated a deep cross into the box and pearances for the Saints, he is the Italian goalkeeper drifted to probably entitled to be a touch blasé.

"I'm a show-off," he said. "I just close to rapture that his faith in the that I've got a belief in my ability, but ball pitch I come across as an arro-

> Southampton fans, no doubt, appreciate the fact that Le Tissier has never felt the need to leave, but even they, at times, have been baffled by his loyalty. A few years ago a supporters' group even made a record. "Legend of a Saint", and pleaded through megaphones before a match for their hero to go to whichever club it was necessary to secure his England place. "It's nice that people want the best for me." Le Tissier said, but added he had simply never wanted to go, and that ultimately, it was not loyalty, per se. that had kept him at The Dell, but

"I didn't have an ambition to play for Liverpool or Manchester United," he said, explaining why he believes his higher motives have been equally well served on the south coast. "I had an ambition to play for England and you don't get any higher than that. Where's the lack of ambition there?"

Le Tissier has always said that should Southampton be relegated, he would seek to leave the club. Only this week, he said again it would be "very difficult" for him to play in the a fast buck and they [critics] think I'm



said he believed that Saints will avoid the drop. "I would put money on us staving up."

Le Tissier sees no grounds for belief that his chosen course has been misguided. The argument that playing for a big club would have served his ambition better cuts no ice with him. Even an offer from Saturday's opponents, reportedly for £8m-£10m when Hoddle was the manager, did not sway him. "I love the [Southampton] area. I love the club. The fans have been brilliant to me. I see no reason to move on. I'm happy with my life," he said. "People don't understand me as a person and what I want out of my life. I'm not in it just to make

First Division. But then he also strange because they can't work me the man Saints fans call "Le God" out. And I think that annovs people."

Surely, though, having not been picked for this summer's World Cup, even after scoring an England B hat-trick against an admittedly weak Russian B side, there were regrets that things could have been different? "I was a bit disappointed not to get in the squad of 30 he [Hoddle] announced," Le Tissier said. "But I've never given up hope." He smiled, before adding: "Tve only just turned 30. I think I'm capable of it. I just know that it's not going to take a few good games, its going to take a hell of a lot. But I'll never give up hope until somebody tells me they're never going to pick me."

ever return to his best, the kind of form he produced for a season and a half under the tenure of Alan Ball, of all people, from January 1994 to May 1995 and that has not been

consistently seen since? "I played my best football under Bally without a shadow of a doubt because of the belief he had in me. He believed I was a good player. He popped me in the middle of the park and he said: 'Son, you go and do your own thing.' And he said to the other 10 players: Whenever you get the ball, as often as you can, give it to him.' And that made me feel like the best player in the whole world." In 60 League games under Ball, Le Tissier scored 34 times and in five

cun matches he scored another 10. had against Italy would go just the 1994 and helped them to 10th place a whole different game." the following year.

Will that ever happen again? "The manager [Dave Jones] is starting to believe in me a little bit more than he did last season," said Le Tissier, adding that last season's 12th position could have been better, "I think we took the foot off the pedal a bit because we knew we were safe. You never know, we might get in that position again."

The only time Le Tissier answers a question hurriedly is when asked if there is anything in his career he would like to have done differently. "One thing," came the instant response. "The header I Matthew.

His efforts kept Southampton up in other side of the post. And then it's A local taxi driver has the last

word, oft repeated about Le Tissier.

"He doesn't run around a lot but he

can still turn a game," said the cabbie. "And he's one of the nicest blokes you could ever meet. "I picked him up once in Bedford Place (300 yards from The Dell), ar he asked to go to The Dell.

"I said 'You're 'avin a laugh aren't you?' and he said 'It's a long way round that corner'."

Short distances, whether the length of a walk to The Deli or the margin of that missed goal at Wembley, are obviously the bane of Saint

Answers to sporting quiz of the year from page $19\,$

WHERE IN THE WORLD (Clockwise, from top left) 1 Royal Birkdale, where 17-year-old Justin Rose finished joint fourth in the

2 Silverstone, where Damon Hill spun out 3 Wembley, where England played Saudi Arabia in a World Cup warm-up match 4 Atlantic City, where Lennox Lewis knocked out Shannon Briggs in March to

retain his WBC heavyweight title 5 The Bislett Stadium In Oslo, where rare defeat on Michael Johnson 6 Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica. where England's Alec Stewart was among those who suffered because of the dangerous pitch, which led to the abandon-ment of the first Test against the West

7 (centre) Stade Roland Garros, where Martina Hingis and Jana Novotna won the

TROUBLED TIMES

1 Adam Holfioake, who was describing the weather in Bangladesh during the Eng-land cricket team's defeat by South Africa

in the Wills International Cup 2 France's Zinedine Zidane, who was sent off against Saudi Arabia in the Stade de France but went on to score two goals in the World Cup final

3 Faustino Asprilla after being substituted during Colombia's first World Cup game against Romania

4 Paul Gascoigne, whose provocative nusical mime angered Celtic fans at the Old Firm match in January 5 Paul Ince, sent off in Sweden after two

RECORD BREAKERS 1 Graeme Hick, who became the 24th

i Graeme Mick, who became the 24th cricketer to score 100 first-class centuries. He achieved the mark in his 574th innings, making him the third fastest centurion behind Don Bradman (295) and Denis Compton (552)

2 Mark Ramprakash, who hit his first Test century (after 38 innings) in the fifth Test against West Indies in Barbados 3 Notts County, who secured a place in the Second Division on 29 March, the ear-liest a club has achieved promotion in the Football League's 110-year history

4 Pat Symcox, who scored the first Test century by a No 10 batsman for 96 years when he hit 108 for South Africa against Pakistan in Johannesburg

5 Angus Fraser, who took his first 10-wicket haul in a Test match against the West Indies in Port of Spain in February

THE WEMBLEY WAY 1 France beat Wales 51-0 at Wembley in rugby union's Five Nations' Champi-

2 Arsenal, whose only goal in their FA Cup semi-final against Wolves was scored by the Liberian striker Christopher Wreh 3 Rugby league's Challenge Cup final, in which John Kear's Sheffield side upset the odds by beating Wigan 4 Marcelo Salas scored twice at Wemb-

ley in February to give Chile a 2-0 victoover England, whose team included their youngest player this century. Michael

5 Roberto Di Matteo, who scored for Chelses in their Coca-Cola Cup triumph over Middlesbrough. He also scored Chelsea's opening goal in last year's FA Cup final

WINNERS AND LOSERS 1 Lancashire, who won two of cricket's Trophy and the Axa League, on succes-

2 Gianfranco Zola's goal gave Chelsea victory over VfB Stuttgart in the European Cup-Winners' Cup final. Chelsea had last won the trophy in Athens in 1971

3 Cambridge, who took advantage of advantageous weather conditions to win the 144th Boat Race in record time 4 Lee Westwood, who won the Freeport-McDermott Classic at English Turn, New

Orleans, in only his eighth golf tourna-5 Port Vale's Allen Tankard missed the final penalty in an FA Cup third round Shoot-out against Arsenal

GROUNDS FOR DEBATE

1 Richmond Rugby Club, who left the Athletic Ground to share with Reading Foot-

2 Halifax, who left Thrum Hall in March and moved into The Shay, home of the Conference winners Halifax Town

3 France, who used to play their major played their first match at the Stade de France in St Denis, venue of the World Cup final, in January

So what of the future then? Will

4 Everton fans celebrated Chelsea's 2-0 win over Bolton on the last day of the season, which guaranteed their club's Premiership survival 5 Crystal Palace, who recorded their first

ne Premiership win of the season on

FAME FOR 15 MINUTES The London Scottish rugby union player had his ear bitten during a game against Bath in January

2 The 16-year-old Australian became the youngest tennis player to win an ATP event, the Australian men's hardcourt 3 The Stevenage Borough forward scored the equaliser to earn an FA Cup third

man bobsleigh team, whose bronze was the only British medal success at the Winter Olympics in Nagano 5 Everton made Simonsen the most ex-pensive goalkeeper in English football his-tory when they agreed a £3.3m deal to sign him from Tranmere

round replay against Newcastle United

4 Olsson was the leader of Britain's four-

END OF THE LINE 1 Tony Jarrett, the British athlete, who

won the 110m hurdles at the Commonwealth Games 2 The England rugby union team, who 3 Michael Lynagh, whose six successful

SPORTING QUIZ ANSWERS stopped South Africa establishing a by beating them at Twickenham 3 Sunderland's Michael Gray, whose

> play-off final 4 Lilian Thuram, who scored both of France's goals in their 2-1 victory over Croatia in the World Cup semi-finals 5 Jack Nicklaus, who missed a major championship for the first time since 1961 when he pulled out of the Open at Roy-

miss gave Charlton a 7-6 victory in the

penalty shoot-out at the First Division

6 Cal Ripken, who in September was left out of the Baltimore Orioles baseball team

 at his own request 7 Natasha Zvereva, who beat Steffi Graf at Wimbledon 8 Heart of Midlothian, who ended years

disappointment for their fans by beating Rangers in the Scottish Cup final 9 Michael Atherton, whose run of consecutive Test appearances ended when he withdrew from the game against Sri Lanka 10 Rangers, whose attempt to win the Scottish championship for the 10th season in succession ended when Celtic beat St Johnstone 2-0 with goals by Henrik Larsson and Harald Brattback

GOLDEN OLDIES

Petr Korda, who won his first Grand Slam tennis title at the Australian Open 2 Jon Callard, whose late penalty earned Bath a 19-18 victory over Brive in rug-by union's Heineken Cup final

kicks helped Saracens beat Wasps in rug-by union's Tetley's Bitter Cup final 4 John Elway, the Denver Broncos quar terback, led his team to a 31-24 Super Bowl victory over the Green Bay Pack-ers. He had been on the losing side in his three previous Super Bowl appearances 5 Mark O'Meara, who won his first major golf title with his triumph at the US Masters at Augusta in April

THE GLOBAL GAME 1 Hickie's try for Ireland against France was the first scored by Ireland in Paris

since 1980

Catherina McKiernan, who provided Ireland's first victory in the London Marathon 3 The European golf tour

Doug Walker, Doug Turner and Julian Golding, who took the first three places in the men's 200 metres final at the European athletics championships 5 The first Test between West Indies and

England in Jamaica was abandoned af-ter 56 minutes because of a dangerous pitch with England on 17 for 3 6 Olivier Pesiler, riding High-Rise, held off John Reid, on City Honours, to become the first French jockey to win the Derby at Epsom since 1963

7 John Higgins won the world snooker championship by beating Ken Doherty 8 Crystal Palace's home game against Sheffield United was televised live in China following the signing of two Chinese internationals by Crystal Palace 9 Marco Pantani, winner of the Tour de

10 Brian Watts, who was beaten by Mark O'Meara in a play-off for the Open at Roy-al Birkdale. Watts earned success in Japan after failing to secure his US Tour card

WHO SAID IT?

Tony Adams, the Arsenal captain, after his team's Premiership triumph 2 Dwight Yorke on his transfer from Aston Villa to Manchester United 3 Martin O'Neill, Leicester City manager, after Shearer's controversial challenge

on Nell Lennon in April 4 Glenn Hoddle on David Beckham after his free-kick had helped England beat Colombia 2-0 and qualify for the second

round of the World Cup 5 Glenn Hoddle explaining the omission of Paul Gascoigne from England's World Cup squad

6 Glenn Hoddle on David Beckham after the Manchester United player's sendingoff against Argentina in the World Cup 7 Mika Hakkinen on pre-race nerves before his Formula One championship-winning triumph in the Japanese Grand Prix

8 Carl Llewellyn, rider of the Grand National winner, Earth Summit 9 Mark Taylor, Australia's cricket captain. on reaction to his decision to declare against Pakistan while he was on 334 not out it was his career-best total and equalled that of Sir Donald Bradman 10 France's Laurent Blanc on being denied a place in the World Cup final when he was sent off after Croatia's Slaven Bil-

K had fallen theatrically in the semi-finals

King George VI Chase: The history of Boxing Day's showpiece suggests that last year's winner will triumph again

Tradition means Business as usual

desert their presents on Boxing Day morning and go to Kempton Park will receive a cracker. All the spectators who attend the King George VI Chase card at Sunbury this Saturday will expect an athletic version in the afternoon. The portents suggest they will not be disap-

History shows us that the King George fully deserves its reputation as the most prestigious conditions chase apart rom the Cheltenham Gold Cup. In one sense though it is dramatically different from the Blue Riband.

When a horse wins Chelenham's championship the chances of it doing so again seem to be minimal. Once a King George has been collected, however, you have to try monstrously hard to prevent another attaching itself to you. If See More Business, the victor 12 months ago, wins on Saturday, he will become the fourth dual winner of the contest in the last 10 years.

"See More", as they call him in his Somerset stable, is a hasty piece of work when he first comes in from a summer at grass. "He's not so bad once he's fit, but to start with when he comes back he's a real Jack the Lad." Paul Nicholls, the eight-year-old's trainer, said yesterday. "You have to be very careful and when you clip him he could literally kill you. His jumping. The occasional lapsmood can change very quickly because he's got the aggressive streak which helps makes him such a good racehorse."

They have attempted to replicate See More Business' winning preparation at Ditcheat this season and the challenge looks remarkably similar both in terms of figures in the Firm book and the horse's figure itself. "He's exactly the same as he was last year," Nicholls added. "He did a nice piece of work this morning and

his weight is just right. "I watched the King George it afterwards you could say that the race did not turn out as strong as it looked going into it. On paper, it looks as though it could be even hotter this year. with the likes of Teeton Mill and

THE FIRST 500 children to BY RICHARD EDMONDSON

Imperial Call in there, and it's obvious that any King George takes a lot of winning

ficiencies.

"The horse flew round last year and didn't make a mistake," Nicholls said, "He's clever more than anything else and he has to be because he's not a big, scopey horse and will never be an extravagant

(Kempton 2.20) NB: Lord Of The Rive

day one, but he does seem to get round these big tracks. Joe suits him because he's such a

Nevertheless, if there is a part of See More Business's armoury that was not plunged into the Styx at birth, it is his es are a lifebelt for those in opposition

tough and very game, a horse I admire a lot, but if he is put under pressure, his jumping lets him down slightly," Lorcan Wyer, Simply Dashing's jockey, says. "I think he got all the pen again is open to question."

now all appears to be right. "Simply Dashing came out of last night and when you look at his latest race pretty good and ate up well and his training has gone really well since," the Irishman said. "We are very hopeful he will run a big race.

The favourite will be partnered by young Joe Tizzard, formerly a big name in the West country point-to-point division but a 19-year-old rather less trumpeted in the professional ranks. Tizzard does have ability, though, and at 6ft tall he can very nearly tie his legs under See More Business's belly and negate his mount's leaping de-

RICHARD EDMONDSON Nap: See More Business (Kempton 1.10)

"We've had to live with his jumping and mistakes from good horseman.'

"See More Business is very

breaks going in the race last year and whether that will hap-Wyer's mount has not won for some time now, largely because of defective bellows, but

"Some people have said that



Emerging champion: See More Business (right) gallops out of the mist this week as he works towards Saturday's King George VI Chase at Kempton

tage King George but I can assure you it's still going to take some winning. Mine will not look out of place and we are going down with a good chance.

"I don't know if it will be soft enough for the Irish horse [Imperial Call), and Teeton Mill has a little to find on the official ratings, although he could be a Jodami and go from running well in the Hennessy off a low weight

has stopped improving? All round, it's a fascinating race." It is difficult to assess what Imperial Call, the former Gold Cup winner, has achieved in vic-

certain is the fact that he will make the running. Teeton Mill is the grey attempting to continue the dynasty of Desert Orchid and One

had better prepare herself for a reworking of an old role.

tory in Ireland this winter. More Escartefigue, one of David Nicholson's two runners, exhibits flashes of form but you would not want his company in the trenches, especially not if he was behind you. Adrian Maguire Man. He is almost 10 and has deserts him to ride the accidentto the very top. Who is to say he been hiding in point-to-point prone Mulligan. Challenger Du

fields almost all his life. If he Luc, last year's runner-up, is takes this after just two efforts hardly one you could trust to go in handicaps, Elizabeth Taylor to pay the paper bill either but he does, at least, have form in the race and that counts on

turkey-remains day. Dessie, the four-time winner, will be there to advertise further that fact and it should pay to back the tradition being upheld at what is a traditional time of the year. Go for SEE MORE BUSINESS (nap 2.20).

Favourable forecast

THERE ARE 10 race meetings scheduled for Boxing Day and the forecast suggests that none will be troubled by the weather. The card at Wetherby, which features The Grev Monk in the Rowland Meyrick Chase, starts at 12.45, while at Wincanton (1.00 start) Wayward King's attempt to win the Mid Season

Chase for the second successive year provides the highlight. The other meetings, which will appear in Saturday's Independent with form guides, are at Ayr (12.55), Hereford (12.25), Huntingdon (1.00), Market Rasen (12.30), Newton Abbot (1.20), Sedgefield (1.00) and

KEMPTON - BOXING DAY

HYPERION

12.40 Lawahik 1.10 EXECUTIVE King (nap) 1.45 Decoupage

. . .

11

2.20 imperial Call (nb) 2.55 Soloman 3.25 Melody Maid

GOING: Good to Soft (Good in places).

Eligin-hand course, Practically flat. Run-in of 200yd.

Course is on A308 at Surbury. (Bus link from Richmond & Hatton Cross Underground stations) ADMISSION: Caub £27, Tattersalls £16; Silver Rung £7. Under-tés free. CAR stations) ADMISSIONE CARACTER STATISTICS
FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS
FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS
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LEADING TRAINERS: D Nicholson 19 wise from 67 runners (284%), R Ainer 15-43

LEADING TRAINERS: D Nicholson 19 wise from 67 runners (284%), R Ainer 15-43

LEADING JOCKEYS: J Osborne 22 wire from 73 rides (30.1%), M A Fitzgerald 21-115

(83.%), A Maguire 20-78 (25.9%), R Dunwoody 19-95 (20%),

FAVOURITIES: 122 wire from 289 races (success rate 42.2%) BLINKERED FIRST TIME: None.

LONG DISTANCE TRAVELLER: Kinnescash (145) has been sent 235 miles.

12.40 PERTEMPS MANAGED SERVICES NOVICE HURDLE (B) £10,000 2m Penalty Value £7,133 enterald green, white epaulists and cap 561/ MAGIC CIRCLE (800) (D) (T Bertfield & W Brown) N Henderson 6 11 5 _ M Williamson yelicus, brown sieeves, yelicus armiets MOONDARGA (NZ) (F350) (Sr Eric Parker) Mrs A Perrett 5 Tl 5....... G Bradley

— 10 declared BETTING: 9-4 Grecian Dart, 3-1 Lawahit, 5-1 Jungil, 6-1 Follow The Leader, 7-1 Alhossam, 12-1
Magic Circle, 20-1 Moondarge, Running Water, 33-1 others
1997 Envitance 4 ti 0 M * 7 Doumen 9-1 (F Doumen, F) 7 ran

FORM GUIDE Althosaam: Odds-on win in maiden hide at Fornwell (soft) on seasonal debut tranked by Copper Con (3rd)) and should again beat Yeoman Of the Guard who was fifth. Was more impressive next time on good ground at Tauriton. Grecian Dart: Beaten at Ascot and Chelanham before a cosy 8-length win from My Lisa Too in lower grade at Windsor (good to soft). Probebly improving Lawahik: Very pleasing hunding debut at Haydock (soft) where he led at the lest before winning by 3 lengths from Subtle Influence. Well-regarded.
Follow The Leader: Consistent since winning maden hide at Gowran in September, beaten nermativi in good Lepoparistown handicas less time. Imperial Call's stahlerate.

fore winning by 3 lengths from Subtle Influence. Well-regarded
Follow The Leader: Consistent since winning maden hale at Gowran in September,
Follow The Leader: Consistent since winning maden hale at Gowran in September,
burget: Botted up at odds-on at Ultroster (soft) on Saturday to further frank the form
of his previous third to Hidebound at Newbury (good to soft)
Magic Circle: Nevan bumper winner in 1897 and later bought for 50,000 gms at Doncaster, Probable second string behind Grecian Dert
Moondarget: New Zealand-bred son of Touching Wood, interesting newcomer
Bunning Weber: Won Hurtangdon NH Flat race last season before a good second to
Cord Of The Flies under his penalty at Doncaster. Down the field in Champion Bumper
at Chetterham Festival but was eased when chance had gone. One to keep an sye on
Yeoman Ofthe Guard: Promising fifth to Athossam on Fontwell debut but held on that
Zurs: Appeared not quite to get the bip when severith to Shahrur at Windsor, but on
this sharp track could go well if going not too testing
VERDICT: AUNGELI may not have beaten much when landing the odds at Uttowster

THE SHALP THEN COURT GO WELL BY THE WAS A SHALP THE SHALP SHALP THE SHALP SHAL

1.10 NETWORK DESIGN FELTHAM NOVICE CHASE Grade 1 (A) £35,000 3m Penaity Value £22,715

Executive King: Progressive young sort who was well , laced to win at Market Rasen, here and at Newbury before stopped up to Grade 2 .a Lingliad (3m, soft) where he won by 17 lengths from Lord Of The River (gave 4b) who lost he chance with an error at the second last lence. Rased again in class but if, line form

irbee: Smart pointer who converted well to regulation fences with wins at Worces and Chepstow, Unsuried by strong pace in Red Marauder's race at Ascot last time King Of Sparta: Benefited from Mister Morose's poor performance at Cheltenham Is rung or spearar: seriemed from Misser Mortoses poor performance at Chemennam last time, but even so ran on gamely to win by half a length from Scotia Nostra Lord Of The Rilver: Mistake and stumbled 2 fences out when a couple or so lengths behind Executive King at Lingtiekt. Has 4th pull and should be suited by trip and going Misser Miorose: Hed off-day at Chellenham last time. Better judged on cheang debut at Cheltenham where he beat subsequent scorers Dines and Desert Mountain at Chetterham where he best subsequent scorers ones and Desert Mountain Miki Dee; Northern raider well regarded by his ethrewd trains, Improved a lot on his chas-ing debut at Market Rasen (form worked out well) to beat Foundry Laine at Wetherby Song Of The Sword: Made naming but made errors and was headed after mistake 3 out before 22 lengths third of 5 to Spendid (gave 2lb) at Chettenham Spendid: Has won all three starts (Wetherby and twice at Chettenham) since switch-ing to lences that seeson and disposed of Derrymore Mist in circleal style last time.

VERDICT: SPENDID looks to have a solid chance though whether this sharper track will suit him as well as Wetherby and Cheltenham, where he has won his choose to date, is one of the ingredients to help make this an intriguing contest between the young staying nonces. Executive King has been the star of the Hubbard stable this season and could again take a lot of beating, while Mister Morose was rumoured to have been working poorly at home prior to his Cheltenham run a fortnight ago.

1.45 PERTEMPS CITY NETWORK HANDICAP HURDLE (B) £10,000 2m Penalty Value £6,853 orange, black epasters, black and orange striped steeves, black cap, orange star 21-202 DECOUPAGE (28) (D) (J F Dean) C Egenon 6 ft 8 white black stype, black cap 142-0 ROAD RACER (21) (CD) (Mrs A West) P R Webber 5 11 5........

ETTING: 7-4 Tisschwur, (13-1) (132) (17) (137) (1487) and Lee) Mrs J Pitmen 5 10 2....... R Johnson emerate green, red extipe, yellow sleeves, red cap.

— 12 declared —

BETTING: 7-4 Tisschwu, 5-1 Decoupage, 11-2 Sarstrus, 7-1 Road Rock, 12-1 Neel Fest, Romeway Renegade, 14-1 Kinneacash, 16-1 King Of Thieves, 20-1 Classic Eagle, Shahruz, 25-1 Belladux, 40-1 Danegold

1897: Serenus 4 10 12 Ni A Fitzgerald 11-4 | I tav (N Henderson) 7 ran **FORM GUIDE**

Trutchey: Followed most encouraging Newbury reappearamar wint a very composite to your Strainbot at Cheltenham
Demegoid: Hea run a couple of stinkers on ground too soft for him ance ratting up early-season hat-inick. Looks too high in the weights and ground likely to be adverse Serenus: Beaten 2 lengths by Polar Prospect in the Walam Hill Hurdle at Sandown where Shahrur and Polar Recer were eighth and futh. Won this test year. Stable in form. Decoupage: Beaten 5 lengths by Walaha Sands at Newbury lest time when Executive Decision was eighth. Previously in front of Kinnescash and Denegoid when fourth to Grey Short at Cheltenham. Holds his form and course should suit
Kinnescash: Consistent sort who won by 4 lengths from Caulver at Aintree fast time.

Kinnescastin: Consistent son who won by 4 lengths from Laber at Amtree test time. A leading contender on that form Road Racer: Ran with promise on reappearance and had Shahrur (gave 7to) 5 lengths back, when second to Buddy Marvel here in February. Suited by track and acts on soft Runsaway Renegade: Lightly-raced winning hurdler who has been highly tried but was excellent fifth of 15 to Zatarabad at Punchestown in April excellent firm of to it is averabled at Punchestown in April
Shehrur: Suffering from excellent campaign last season but could not be ruled out
king of Thilevest in form and beat Truancy at Fontwell this month. Has more on plate
Classic Eagle: Driven out at Huntingdon to win by a head from Tashreef (rec 28/b)
and though raised in class not without a chance
Next Feat; in good form this season and was ready 6 langths winner from Nazir (rec
14b) at Wincarton last time. Hold-up horse who looks best of the bottom weights
Belfactur: Behind Next Feat on Wincarton reappearance. Not an obvious contender

VERDICT: Thitchev won unextended at Cheltenham lest time but this is a fair toughe proposition, a totally different course, and one is wary of short-priced feworites in hot handicap hurdles. ROAD RACER is the one to catch the eye. This sort of course suits him and he ran well for a long way on his Sandown debut when last years winner of this race, Sersinus, was second. Decoupage has solid claims for each-way support. 2.20 PERTEMPS KING GEORGE VI CHASE (Grade 1) (A) £100,000 3m Penalty Value £64,360

40F-40 CHALLENGER DU LUC (FR) (21) (D) (D A Johnson) M Pipe 8 11 10 . . . A P MicCoy B TIC-4: SEE MORE BUSINESS (21) (CD) (P carbor & J regreey) | read-occupant green, white checks. Ight green steeres, dark green and white check cap (6-322 SMPLY DASHING (14) (S Hammond) T Expensively 71 10 _________ L Wyer V red, white sash, emerald green steeres, white armiets, emerald green cap 21-55 SUPER TACTICS (35) (CD) (H V Perry) R Alber 10 11 10 _______ A Thomson and each and armiets, gold and white hooped cap

BETTING: 5-2 See More Business, 11-4 Tecton Mill, 4-1 Imperial Cell, 5-1 Simply Dathing, 15-2 Escartefigue, 14-1 Challenger Du Luc, 18-1 Super Tectics, 25-1 Coonse Hill, 33-1 Mulligan 1997 See More Business 7 11 10 A Thomson 10-1 (P Micholls) 8 ran

FORM GUIDE

Challenger Du Luc: Beaten 2 lengths by See More Business in last year's race (would not go past), but on the side since. Disappointing 25 lengths 4th in Murphy's Gold Cup and 13 lengths 7th of 10 to Direct Route at Sandown (2m ch. good) latest starts. Coomo Hill: 1996 Hennessy Gold Cup wirner, but training problems since and first win since Feb 197 when beating Samlee 2 lengths at Ascot (3m ch soft) in October. Led early but pulled up 4 out in Hennessy at Newbury last month and difficult to tancy Becarterigue: Leading home-trained staying novice last season, finishing 2nd in Sun Alliance Chasa. Promising 5 lengths 2nd to Suny Bay at Haydock last month, but below-torm last of 3 to See More Business at Chepstow (3m hoap ch. good) latest. Sometimes looks less than hearty battler and has something to find at this top level imperial Call: 1996 Gold Cup winner, back to his best this season with wins at Limenick, Nasa and Punchestown, beating Dorans Pride 11/Lengths last time (2m4t in the language). Fromt-numer and often spectacular jumper who will want plenty of beating Mutligan: Handicapped by enrate jumping since fine novince career and back to hurding last backend. Promising 36 lengths 8th of 31 to Northern Startight in Tripleprint Gold Cup (eased after faded 3 out), but unproven over this trip and difficult to assess See More Business: Last years 2-length winner from Challenger Du Luc. Later carned out in Gold Cup but back to form at Chepstow latest (3m hoap ch. good), big Don Samourar a length. Makes mistakes but a fighter who will be a tough nut to crack again Samourar a length. Makes mistakes but a fighter who will be a tough nut to grack again

Samourai a length. Makes mistakes but a fighter who will be a tough nut to crack again Simply Clashing: Wind problems since very promising Ascol win or Autumn 197, but tast-finishing length 2nd to Cyfor Malta in Murphy's Gold Cup (2m44) and staying on 1/4, length numer-up to Northern Starfight at Cheltenham (2m5t heap ch, good to soft) latest. Should be suited by this course and by no means out of it Super Tactics: Goes particularly well here, winning Racing Post Chase last Fabruary from Land Afac Rack to best when beating Berfone at Wincarton (2m5t heap ch, good) but disappointing in two starts since and likely to struggle in this class Teeton Mills Former top hunter-chase. Well weighted when career-best effort when landing Henriessy Gold Cup (Newbury 3m21 heap ch, good to soft) last month, lead-ing 3 out to best Eudipe 15 lengths. Still on the upgrade, but plenty to find in this grade

VERDICT: With Super Tactics likely to ease the burden of pacernalung, IMPERIAL CALL can underline his return to the top flight. He ran a high-class field ragged over 2m4f a Punchesiown and his bold jumping could induce errors from See Morre Bussiness, while running the finish out of Simply Dashing. It would be foolish to underestimate Teston Milli, but it is a grant leap from 10st 5tb in the Hernessy to the top level.

2.55 NETWORK PERSONNEL NOVICE CHASE (CLASS B) £10,000 2m Penalty Value £6,710 red, white star, simped steaves, yellow cap 10262/ EAGLES REST (889) (D) (Lady Lloyd Webber) N Henderson 7 π ().... M A Pitagerald 1022/ EAGLES REST (889) (D) (Lack) Lloyd Webber) N Henderson 7 to 0... M A Fitzgerald profit and grey dismonds, print cap
4 14064 FLYING EAGLE (F70) (D) (T F Maycock) R Simpson 7 to 0... A Thornton red, white operates, white observes, red seams
5 122-34 SOLOMAN (45) (D) (R F Eact) J Elifond 5 to 0... ... M Williamson yellow, black hoops, veltow steeres, black seams
— 5 declared — BETTRIG: 1-2 Dines, 4-1 Distant Echo, 8-1 Solomen, 10-1 Eagles Rest, 20-1 Flying Eagle 1997: Kadastrof 7 to 8 A Thornton 9-4 (R Dokin) 5 ran

POHM GUIDE

Dines: Proved himself among top novices when making all to beat Dawn Leader 11/s lengths at Sandown (2m nov ch, good). Garne and mostly jumps wetl. The one to beat Distant Echo: Improved to beat Reliander at Chepstow (2m, good to soft) at Chepstow lest morth, but unsurised by soft when disappointing 2n lengths 3rd of 6 to Nipper Reed at Uttower (2m nov ch) last week. Probably open to improvement Eagles Rests Bumper winner and smart novice hunder? 2 sessors ago. Built for chasing and from in-form yerd with strong novice hand. Leading contender deepite lay-off Phyling Eagler Useful 2m handicap hundler last term, but much improved on Flat this year, wirming 6 times. Wet to race over tences but yard has form line with Nopor Reed Soloman: Towcester novice hundle winner last term, making chasing debut after promising efforts over umber this term. Looks the part and from yerd with good form lines. VERDICT: DINES looked less than the finished article when scoring in a very strong

field at Sandown, but he tacks nothing in courage and his expenence could be tellin factor. Both Eagles Rest and Soloman promise to make their mark over tences, bu

3.25 PERTEMPS CATERING HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS B) £10,000 added 3m 110yds Penelty Value £6,840

FORM GUIDE

FORM GUIDE

Deraydan; Three-time winner last term but looked non-stayer when bin distance into 4th in this last year. 22 lengths 7th of 11 to Prave Tomado at Cheltenham (3m) last time Papo Khartsma: Improving every outing and led before last to bt Toby Brown 11/s lengths with Melody Mald 3 lengths away 3rd at Sandown (2m) houp hide, good) latest hor's Flutter-Tincky but useful, with write at Windsor and Ascut last tame. Looked exposed on this mark when 7 lengths 3rd to Buckhouse Boy at Wincanton a year ago Melody Mald: Improved with 3rd to Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham and 4 lengths 3rd Papo Khartsma at Sandown (2m 6f. good) Likely to do better under more patient ride Sutaweat: Namow winner from Coh Shol Noh over CD from 4b higher last morth but suffed when tailed off 9th of 11 to Papo Khartsma at Sandown (2m6 hoap hide, good) Be My Mot: Had Sutaweat 2 lengths back 3rd when winning over CD in Nov, but 9th worse off now. Looks exposed after 2nd to Dashing Dolker at Windsor (2m61, good) Major's Latur Winner at Bengor, Stratford and Lecester last term (latest by 20 lengths from 21b lowert, Fit from AW Plat, but plenty to do from 15to out of weights

VERDICT: With Bango Khartsma filely in head for Wincanton, the ways could be onen.

VERDICT: With Pape Kharisma likely to head for Wincamon, the way could be open for MELODY MAID to get back on the winning trail. She appeared to get in front for too soon at Sandown, but looks capable of winning off this mark. A slowly-run race might let Deraydan into the sheke-up, but the major threat could be twor's Flutter, who runs well here on the Flat and is the sort to go well fresh.

Wolverhampton (1.00).

LEOPARDSTOWN - BOXING DAY 2.40 DENNY GOLD MEDAL NOVICE CHASE (Grade 1) £40,000 added 2m 1f Penalty Value £26,000

FORM GUIDE

Milicto's Dream: Folkowed 20-length win over Torvill at Thurles (2m2t, heavy) with smilar success over previous winner Walt at Navari (2m8t, heavy). Shorter tip a worry Promister. Stamped himself leading novice chases with wins at Listowet, Nasa and Faryhouse (2m4t, good to soft), bearing Fouchaget (king (rec Bib) comfortable 3 lengths on latest start. Good jumper who should not be bothered by drop in trip.

Ambertisigh House: Has not progressed from win over Lady Dasy at Gowran Park and looks held by the Soon on Purchastrous number held to the Soon on Purchastrous numbers of the Soon on Purchastrous numbers held to the Soon on Purchastrous numbers of the S

Amberinger House: Has not progressed from very diver Laby as current hank and books held by His Song on Punchestown running behind Guttlendge. Balact: On the upgrade, but taking a big step up in class offer, led last, beat Livin Joy 1% lengths at Commel (2mt) now ch, soft, Pentry to find. Feathered Lasder: Backed to reverse it lengths Nass defeat on 2th worse terms at Farryhouse (2mt) good to soft, but only 4 lengths 4th after mistakes. Shorter mp against him Finnegan's Hollow: Promise in nowice chasses last Autumn (12 lengths 3rd to Bavard Jet at Cork, 2m soft) but quickly returned to hurdes. Difficult to assess after lay-off Lawterts homeown last and impressive 20-length winner from Notcomplaningbut at Nass (2m3).

Langurit improving last and impressive 20-length winner from Noticomplaminghout at Neas (2m3), soft) after neck defeat by Promalee (gave 7to) over 2m on earne course. Neative Estatuse Encouraging chase debut when bin 8 lengths by Prince Rt at Novam (2m4) nov ch, soft, time should said but held by Landum through Noticomplaminghout. His Song: Insh Champon Hurdle 2nd last term and easy wirner of first two races over lentes. Out of sorts when bin shallind by Guttendige at Punchestown (2m4), nov ch, heavy) talest

VERDICT: With the question mark over His Song after Punchestown, it may pay to sade with PROMALEE, who appeared to have something in reserve at Farryhouse and might just have the edge on Lainturn, who could find the trip on the sharp side.

KEMPTON

12.40: The ex-French Flat performer LAWAHIK jumped well to land a touch on his Haydock debut, suggesting more to come.

1.10: EXECUTIVE KING goes from strength to strength and spreadeagled a solid field at Lingfield last time. While the ground remains on the easy with Lord Of The River.

1.45: Tiutchev is likely to be all the rage after his Cheltenham win, but this tight track appears more likely to suit the progressive DECOUPAGE, whose Newbury second to Wahiba Sands has received a handsome

boost from Lady Rebecca.

2.20: It will be fast and furious up front here, and that could put

HYPERION'S

TV TIPS

See More Business's jumping under pressure, leaving the way clear for IMPERIAL CALL to continue his steady progress back to the top of the tree.

2.55: Josh Gifford, who upset some useful povices at Ascot last week with Kurakka, has a very high regard for SOLO-MAN, who can justify his faith

with a winning chasing debut. LEOPARDSTOWN

2.40: LANTURN simply jumped for fun to win doing handsprings at Naas and could be the one to upset the highly-regarded His Song and Promalee.

FIRST SHOW

Kempton 1.45									
	C	н	L	S	T				
Tutchev	74	64	15-8	13-8	7-4				
Decoupage	5-1	11-2	5-1	5-1	92				
Sarenus	11-2	11-2	5-1	11-2	6 -1				
Road Racer	7-1	8-1	Q-1	7-1	32				
Kinnescash	14-1	14-1	12-1	14-1	14-1				
Nest Feet	14-1	T2-1	14-1	12-1	E-1				
Runesey Renega	te 11-1	10-1	10-1	14-1	14-1				
King Of Thirves	14-1	15 -1	20-1	16-1	16-1				
Statur	14-1	20-1	14-1	20-1	16-1				
Belleter	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1	B 1				
Classic Eagle	30-1	20-1	75-1	20-1	20-1				
Denegoid	40-1	40-1	40-1	40-1	40-1				
Each-way, a q		he add	. pbc	s 1, 2	3				

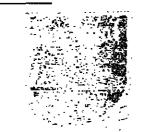
Kempton 2.20 See More Bueiness 5-2 5-2 5-2 5-2 Teeton 160 11-4 11-4 11-4 11-4 reportal Call 41 41 41 92 Simply Dashing 11-2 5-1 9-2 5-1 5-1 EscarieSigne 7-1 15-2 8-1 8-1 8-1 Challenger du Luc 14-7 12-1 12-1 12-1 12-1 Super Tectics 16-1 20-1 20-1 16-1 16-1 33-1 33-1 25-1 33-1 33-1 Each was a fifth the oxids, places 1, 2, 3

C Corel, H William Hill, L Lactoroless, S Stanley, T Total

After a spluttering first half of the season, in which the Champions' League challenge was undermined by injuries and (largely unnecessarily) suspensions, Sunday's performance against Leeds was a reminder of what can be

sn inf

Emmanuel Petit and Patrick Vieira looked a formidable force again at the heart of the team, while Dennis Bergkamp and Marc Overmars seemed at last to have shrugged off the lethar-



gy that has dogged them since the World Cup. Doubts still surround the

reserve strength, and allowing lan Wright to leave last summer still looks a bad error, Another Champions' League place may depend on keeping a more settled side and greater discipline. Star pupil: Emmanuel Petit. Can do better: Dennis

ASTON VILLA

BACK ON top of the Premiership following Monday's narrow victory at Charlton, Villa's season has to be seen as a glowing tribute to John Gregory's management skills. Considerable scepticism

followed his appointment as Brian Little's successor last February, but Villa's record under his charge has been outstanding - 27 points from 11 Premiership matches last season, 36 from 18 during the current campaign.

Even the loss of Dwight Yorke has failed to disturb Villa's progress, the blow cushioned by the arrival of Paul Merson and Dion Dublin who, along with Alan Thompson, represent Gregory's three major buys.

Star pupil: Gareth Barry.

Can do better: Stan Colly-If there is a doubt over more.

BLACKBURN ROVERS

ROVERS HAVE already tried on the dunce's cap this term and, although now third from bottom, performances need to improve considerably if last-in-class is to be avoided come May. Under Roy Hodgson,

Rovers were looking to escape a visit from the Premiership's inspectors for failing clubs, but Brian Kidd - a great believer in lots of homework - has begun his first senior school headship with a victory and two draws.

The boy in the new blue blazer is Keith Gillespie, a £2.3m Newcastle graduate whose task is to provide under-achiever Kevin Davies. the sporadic Chris Sutton and

in front of goal. The defence need to improve their maths and realise that a large goals against column equals rele-

Kidd has to work on attendance levels. Players marked "absent" through injury or suspension (40 yellow and four red cards already) are a too familiar register entry. the hard-working Nathan Star pupil: Tim Sherwood. Blake with multiple choices Can do better: Kevin Davies

CHARLTON ATHLETIC

WHEN CHARLTON topped the Premiership after two games. the local newspaper produced a cut-out-and-keep League table. The possibility that it may be the only thing to remember the season by has grown stronger in recent weeks as Alan Curbishley's braves have slipped closer to the sort of position most people had predicted.

Amid all the talk of a difficult start, getting Southampton for the second game proved a wonderful boost for the team, the crowd and (after a 5-0 win) the goal difference. Drawing at places like Newcastle. Arsenal, Liverpool and Tottenham confirmed the side's fighting Star pupil: Mark Kinsella. qualides, but an inability to pick up points from winnable



home games meant they could not afford the recent run of away defeats.

Failure to finish off some often impressive approach play has been a prime cause, with Clive Mendonca's unexpected lack of goals adding to the alarm. A new striker is a necessity.

٠ --- \$

2.50%

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7: 22: 2222

4.7

Can do better: Clive Men-

## CHELSEA

REMAINING UNBEATEN SINCE the opening day of the seasoп at Coventry has given Chelsea an excellent chance of landing their first championship since Ron Greenwood was centre-half in 1955. Greenwood, whose all-English West Ham side won the FA Cup and Cup-Winners' Cup a decade later, might regret that not a single goal has been scored by an Englishman, but that is the route foreign coaches tend to

Only Manchester United can rival the depth of Gianluca Vialli's squad, which has not suffered from the loss of Brian Laudrup and Pierluigi Casiraghi – bringing in Bjame Goldback for only £500,000



mark was a clever stroke. As long as Vialli understands the club's passion to win the title, and is prepared to sacrifice other competitions to do it if necessary, Chelsea may be able to take advantage of United's

Star pupil: Gianfranco Zola. from Copenhagen as soon as Can do better: Dennis Wise.

gently needed and more cre-

and greater strength in depth

would not go amiss. The ex-

citing thing is that Jonathon

pean Cup.

obsession with the Euro-

# COVENTRY CITY

AFTER GETTING a sniff of Uefa Cup qualification last season, Coventry's record so far has been a massive disappointment to a board who have not been frightened to spend. Yet the quality of their football has not declined by much, which just goes to show how narrow is the difference between success and failure and why manager Gordon Strachan was so wary last season of looking

Losing top scorer Dion Dublin to Villa came as a body blow, but the combination of Noel Whelan and Darren Huckerby, supplied from the wing by Stephen Froggatt, remains a potent attack, and Gary McAllister is back to provide class in midfield.

beyond survival.



VIIIa's championship creden-

tials, it lies in their results so

far against the other main

contenders. Although they

produced a storming come-

back from 2-0 down to beat

Arsenal, previous matches

against Chelsea, Manchester

United and Liverpool vielded

only one point in total.

son continues to impress at right wing-back. None the less, after only three wins in the last 12 Premiership matches, alarm bells will be ringing for Strachan, who may live to regret not court-

ing the vacancy at Leeds with a little more vigour. Star pupil: Roland Nilsson. Can do better: Darren

# **DERBY COUNTY**

FOR A while last season, Jim Smith's side looked irresistible, full of pace and intricate movement, a triple strike force of Dean Sturridge, Paulo Wanchope and Francesco Baiano making for many an exhilarating spectacle.

This season it is not really happening for them. Sturridge blows hot and cold and Baiano, formerly such a slippery opponent, is a pale shadow of last season's fans' favourite. Meanwhile. Wanchope's unpredictable ec- to improve on last season's centricities have not been quite so effective.

The arrival of Stefan Schnoor, Horatio Carbonari and Spencer Prior has brought added stability at the back, accounting for a record of only four defeats so far. Baiano.

but nine draws reflect the lack of a consistent cutting edge, a problem Smith needs to resolve soon if Derby are

ninth place. None the less,

only three seasons after mov-

ing up from the Nationwide.

their future in the top flight

Star pupil: Rory Delap. Can do better: Francesco

looks secure.

# **EVERTON**

WHERE DO you start? Which is precisely the dilemma facing Bill Kenwright and any consortium wishing to buy the club off Peter Johnson. Years of mismanagement have reduced a great club into a disjointed and unhappy mess. The prospects? A struggle against relegation.

The problem facing Kenwright is money because Johnson will want at least £50m for his majority shareholding and when you take the club's debts and urgent future spending on the team into account the figure is close to double that. For a man who hoped to purchase the club for £5m five years ago, it is a huge financial leap.

If that does not paint an optimistic picture, it is pos- by.



itively brilliant compared to watching the team.

John Collins and Don Hutchison have been astute buys but someone who can score has to be added or bright prospects like Danny Cadamarteri and Michael Ball will become disillusioned. Star pupil: Dave Watson. Can do better: Nick Barm-

# LEEDS UNITED

FUNNY THING, managership. Three months ago Leeds supporters were mortified George Graham preferred White Hart Lane to Elland Road: now the outcry would be deafening if he returned to displace David O'Leary.

The sorcerer's apprentice tas picked up the wand and converted a functional and hard-to-beat team into one solid but another striker is urthat has accelerated the improvement and can now genuinely thrill. The team is too inexperienced to be a consistent title challenger this season, but in two years' time? How O'Leary spends the money and nurtures his Alan Smith already look good young players will answer

The Martyn-Radebe-Batty- Can do better: Clyde Wijn-Hasselbaink spine is rock hard,

# LEICESTER CITY

MARTIN O'NEILL continues to make silk purses from sows' ears, turning out a team that frequently appears greater than the sum of its parts. Could anyone else have rescued the career of Tony Cottee? After his drawn-out rejection of the chance to nanage Leeds, one tends to conclude that the environment is one in which he thrives, engaged on the one hand in internal political warfare, on the other in defying the odds on the field, though

he must be credited with

Woodgate, Stephen McPhail, being honourable, too, having pledged never to walk Lee Bowyer, Harry Kewell and out on a contract. enough for the Premiership. This season, respectably Star pupil: Lucas Radebe. the Worthington Cup, Leices- Fenton.



ter have much to be happy about, although the time will surely come when the temptation to sell Emile Heskey grows too large to resist.

What is more, Neil Lennon and Muzzy Izzet, the key components of O'Neill's industrious midfield, are also attracting covetous glances. high in the Premiership and eyeing up Wembley again in Can do better: Graham

# LIVERPOOL

LOOK UP last year's report and merely change the date. Liverpool were potential trying to become substance at the end of 1997 and 12 months on they are further away from their target. The failure to buy a centre-half has gone beyond a mystery and is approaching a scandal contributing more than anything to Roy Evans' departure. Excuses are not enough, money has to be spent, and there would be worse buys than Matt Elliott.

The full-backs are fallible, Paul Ince is a fading force and Steve McManaman should stop saving he wants to stay with the club and sign a contract. Either that or he should be put up for sale.



lisingly close to being a very good side. They have the best two young strikers in the Premiership, Jamie Carragher and Jamie Redknapp could become an exciting core and Patrik Berger can sometimes look world class.

Star pupil: Michael Owen. Can do better: Oyvind Leonhardsen, Jason McAteer, The irritating thing about David James.

# MANCHESTER UNITED

AS THE National Lottery puts it, maybe... just maybe. Qualification for the knockout phase of the European Cup was a minimum requirement and United are sufficiently well placed to make a fifth Premiership title in seven years a possibility, yet there are nore buts surrounding United than for many seasons.

Most focus on the defence, which is shipping goals at an alarming rate. Jaap Stam is a commanding centre-half in search of a partner, Gary Neville is out of position and his brother Phil is having a crisis of confidence, so the sooner Ronny Johnsen and David May are

properly fit the better. Further forward the prob-



riches. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer would walk into any team that did not also have Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole, while Nicky Butt must wonder what he has to do to get a regular place.

The fundamental problem is a lack of height, which could undermine ambitions at home and abroad. Star pupil: Andy Cole.

em is an embarrassment of Can do better: Ryan Giggs.

# MIDDLESBROUGH

AS MIDDLESBROUGH prepared to return to the top flight, it was suggested in these pages that the key to their fate would be Paul Gascoigne - if his world fell apart. so could Boro's.

It is a measure of the significant progress Middlesbrough have made that the travails of their shavenheaded midfielder have been merely incidental in the first half of the season. Boro have not just continued on mobile course: they now have the bonus of the other side of the Gazza coin, a slimline, influential Gas-

placed to challenge for their first appearance in Europe, if Can do better: Mikkel Beck.



not their first title. They are the first time in 68 years and have 30 points in the bag at-Two years ago, at the

same stage of their last Premiership campaign, they had 15. Middlesbrough, this time, are twice as good. Star pupil: Andy Townsend.

# NEWCASTLE UNITED

they were going into their half-way match last season, when they needed to win their final home game to avert the threat of relegation, Newcastle continue to look not so much a team as a collection of individuals. That collection is changing, with David Batty and Keith Gillespie in pastures new and Ruud Gullit starting to land his transfer targets. Newcastle could be on the up after Christmas. Steve Howey's return to

fitness and form has given

Gullit's team a markedly

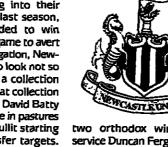
more assured defensive look.

They still remain short of cre-

arive nous in midfield and, de-

spite some encouraging signs

from Stephen Glass and Noi-



two orthodox wingers to service Duncan Ferguson and Alan Shearer,

United could also do with a little stability off the field. A major shareholder is looking to sell out and a manager commuting from a foreign country is not a recipe for long-term success.

Star pupil: Steve Howey. Can do better: Andreas berto Solano, could do with Andersson.

### Forest look doomed to follow the recent tradition of promoted Nationwide clubs failing to make the Premiership grade. Pierre van Hooijdonk's three-month strike certainly did not help matters, but equally to blame is the lack of invest-

table stand. Having arrived to fanfares last year, the new owners have cleared Forest's debts but left them to fend in the Premiership with a First Division team. Few managers have a better record with under-funded clubs than Dave Bassett, but he has enjoyed only limited spending power and not used it no-

ment over which the maverick

Dutchman made his regret-



and Dougie Freedman in place of Van Hooijdonk and Kevin Campbell, for example. could hardly be described as like for like. If a buyer can be found for Van Hooijdonk, and the incoming cash used to good effect, there may still be a chance of survival, but even then only a slim one. Star pupil: Thierry Bonalair. Can do better: Pierre van ticeably well. Neil Shipperley Hooijdonk.

# SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

THE HEAD (as in case) boy has been absent and a permanent expulsion is looming if he does not turn up soon. The irony is that Wednesday's results have been far better in Paolo Di Canio's absence than they were when the mercurial Italian was proving he is one of the most skilfu players in the Premiership.

The reasons are varied. Danny Wilson appeared more unsettled than was expected after his move down the A61 from Barnsley and took time to impress his methods aithough he was not helped by absences due to injury.

Di Canio's absence has given Benito Carbone an extended run. The theory was that two Italians made the team too lightweight and the Canio.



former was usually preferred to his compatriot, which meant Carbone played only intermittently. The difference that selection has made can be seen in his delightful goals and approach play.

Too strong to go down. Wednesday could be an outside bet for the FA Cup. Star pupil: Des Walker. Can do better: Paolo Di

# SOUTHAMPTON

UNTIL LAST season, when Dave Jones led Southampton to a finishing position of 12th, the Saints had followed a fairly consistent seasonal path poor start, minor autumn rally, poor Christmas, scrappy spring and safety come May - for nearly a decade.

This year they're back in the mire and showing few signs yet of getting out. A welter of summer changes (Kevin Davies out, Mark Hughes. Stuart Ripley, David Howells, Hassan Kachloul all in) are Tissier chief among them) partly responsible, as is the and young promise, especially need for a couple of defend- striker James Beattie. They'll ers and a proven attacker.

Throw injury problems into the mix (last Saturday Star pupil: James Beattie. saw 14 players under treat- Can do better: Take your ment) and it's not too hard pick, starting with Hughes.



to see why Southampton are struggling. They have several experienced relegation scrappers (Matt Le need both to perform consistently to stay up.

## TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR SINCE SUCCEEDING the hap-

less (some said hopeless) Christian Gross, George Graham has done enough to convince most Tottenham followers that it was worth biting the anti-Arsenal bullet. The possibility of fusing Arsenal's traditional discipline with Spurs' self-expression is a fascinating one, and David Ginola's subsequent efforts have suggested that Graham can pull it off. He has not rushed off to

market, restricting himself so

far to strengthening the

Club's weakest position by

the protracted signing of

Mauricio Taricco. Allan

Nielsen, like Ginola, is clear-

pswich's useful full-back



for the manager and is the team's most improved player, ahead of Steffen Iversen (now unfortunately injured).

Winning the Worthington Cup. as Spurs should, to guarantee a return into Europe, would ease any lingering discomfort over "the Arsenal man",

Star pupil: David Ginola. ly prepared to put himself out Can do better: lan Walker.

# WEST HAM UNITED

ed in breathless calls for an oxygen tent as West Ham's adventurers reached the uncharted heights of second place at the end of last month. Subsequent defeats at Leeds and Middlesbrough have brought everyone back down to earth.

Generally the defence has been solid, with lan Pearce and Rio Ferdinand excellent in front of the impressive Shaka Hislop. The midfield has shone brightly on occasions, but John Hartson's return of three goals in 15 games means that the re-

Wright has not taken off. Hartson's spat with Eyal Berkovic was one of several



often poorly handled; others included the sale of Andy Impey to Leicester behind the back of manager Harry Redknapp, who has now admitted how difficult it will be to keep Ferdinand at the club. newed partnership with Ian An Important few months

Star pupil: Frank Lampard. Can do better: John Hartson

# WIMBLEDON

THREE-NIL down in 27 minutes at West Ham early in September, Joe Kinnear's side proceeded to serve notice that the old Wimbledon spirit is still alive. The home team were overwhelmed, the game was won 4-3 and those who thought that relegation was on the cards at last were forced to seek out other, less indomitable, candidates.

Wimbledon have been in the top half of the table almost ever since, outgunned only by Manchester United (5-1) and Chelsea (3-0), taking revenge on the latter to reach the Worthington Cup

The most significant factor has been a return to fitness of the strikers whose



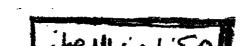
absence caused a paucity of goals last spring. Marcus Gayle has been inching back towards the form of two seasons ago and Jason Eueli has benefited from a new midfield role.

THE COLUMN

If the long term is always imponderable, short-term prospects are bright again Star pupil: Michael Hughes. Can do better: Carl Leaburn.

Reports by Guy Hodgson, Steve Tongue, Jon Culley, Simon Turnbull, Nick Harris, Nick Duxbury

⊕ 433 @ ●



# Ali's alchemy of the human spirit

IN DESCRIBING the scene of Cassius Clay's coronation on 25 February 1964 in Miami Beach, Florida, a distinguished American sports columnist, the late Red Smith, wrote: "Cassius Marcellus Clay fought his way out of the horde that swarmed and leaped and shouted in the ring, climbed like a squirrel on to the red velvet ropes and brandished his still-gloved hand aloft. 'Eat your words,' he howled to the working press

rows, 'Eat your words." Smith's words, the words of practically every reporter at ringside. Words that carried resentment of Clay's uniquely extravagant style, his brashness and obvious contempt for the racist convention that he should be grateful for a chance to rise above disenfranchisement

At least Smith had the grace to add: "Nobody ever had a better right [to how at the press].

"In a mouth still dry from excitement of the most astounding upset in many roaring years, the words don't taste good, but they taste better than they read. The words written here, and practically every-

BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

Today: Boxing

As David Remnick states in The King of the World (Random House), not the most comprehensive or revealing, but beyond doubt the most elegantly crafted book about American hero. Muhammad Ali (so far only available in the United States): "some of Clay's other detractors could barely bring themselves to admit that they had been so wrong about him.

seethed with resentment, as if the outcome had been a conspiracy designed specifically to offend him. If Cassius wants me to say he's the greatest, all right, I'll say it,' Young groused in print, 'but I'll say he scored should be.' the greatest retreating victory since the Russians suckered Napoleon into a snow bank. I never saw Joe Louis run away and win, or Rocky Marciano, where else until the impossible and I'm sure my father never

away and win."

American friends in this trade who think Remnick spends too much time putting down sportswriters of that era point out that Ali was a culture shock, a dramatic departure from the custom of onedimensional fighters.

They miss not only the irony of Ali's lasting fame as a boxer but that of his subsequent passage from reviled draft-dodger and rabble-rouser to all-

As for allegiance to the Nation of Islam, his apparent acceptance of a philosophy that damned the white man as a devil, Remnick quotes Ali's ring doctor Ferdie Pacheco. "He's "Dick Young's column for not a hater," Pacheco tells the the [New York] Daily News author. "But he's always marched to his own drummer. He sees things as he wants to. Whatever is best for him, whatever ideology is best for him, whatever programme is best for the way he thinks his life

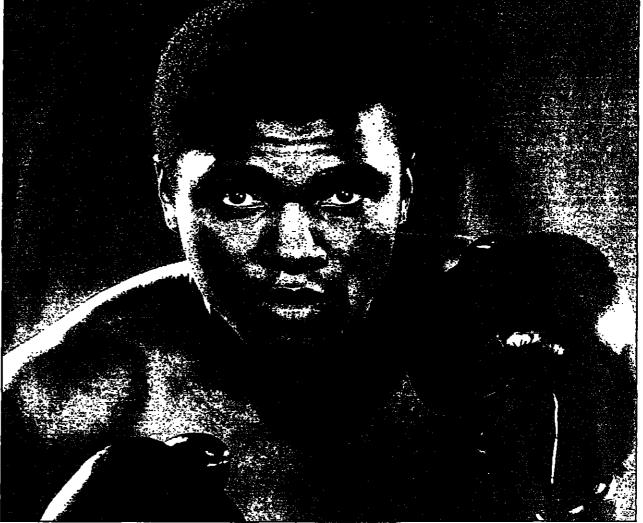
Ali treads slowly now, each careful step a measure of the difficulties inflicted by Parkinson's disease. But in Remnick's stylish prose there is resurrection. Although Ali is followed became the unbelievable truth, saw Jack Dempsey run away no further along the yellow said Sonny Liston would and win, and my grandfather brick road than his defeat of squash Cassius Clay like a never saw John L Sullivan run Floyd Patterson in November 1965 it is enough.

Editor of New Yorker magazine, Remnick won a Pulitzer Prize for Lenin's Tomb: The fall of Communism. With this penetrating study of events that announced Ali as the sports figure of the century and a symbol of black consciousness he lives up to his credentials.

Nobody on this side of the Atlantic who was assigned to charting Ali's progress got closer to him than the ITV boxing commentator Reg Gutteridge.

There are many anecdotes about their relationship in Gutteridge's entertaining autobiography Uppercuts and Dazes (John Blake Publishing, £16.99). When recovering in hospital from a serious illness Gutteridge woke up one evening to find Ali standing over him. Hearing in London that Gutteridge was unwell Ali insisted on seeing him at a late hour. His senses by then impaired. Ali placed a hand on Gutteridge's brow and mumbled a Muslim prayer.

It came as no surprise to boxing people when Naseem Harned split with his Irish mentor Brendan Ingle. The turbulence that entered their relationship after Hamed became established as a major



Muhammad Ali was a culture shock but his fame is lasting - and not just because of his boxing

figure in the sport is vividly ever graced a prize ring". Born in California to Irish Corbett's remarkable career documented by Nick Pitt in James J Corbett caused a tech- emigrants. Corbett brought The Paddy and the Prince (Random House, £16).

Considered by Gene Tunney to have possessed "the keenest and most analytical brain that quis of Queensberry rules.

nical revolution in boxing when he defeated John L Sullivan in 1892 to become the first heavyweight champion under Mar-

science to a sport that had previously been regarded as a brutal test of raw courage and

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in and out of the ring is well told by Patrick Myler in Gentleman Jim Corbett - The Truth Behind a Boxing Legend (Robson Books, £17.95).

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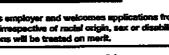
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# SPORTING QUIZ OF THE YEAR

WHERE WERE THESE PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN?

### TROUBLED TIMES

1 Who got into trouble for saying that playing conditions were such that "I felt like I had smoked 10 joints"? 2 Who saw red in his national stadium but returned less than four weeks later to inspire his country to a historic triumph?

3 Who was sent home from France after claiming that some of his colleagues had become "untouchables"?

4 Who whistled up a storm by pre-tending to play a flute? 5 Who collected his 12th and 13th yellow cards and his first red in his 44th England match?

### RECORD BREAKERS

1 Who needed only 574 attempts to become one of the 24 men of the cen-

2 ...and who needed 38 attempts to achieve his century landmark? 3 Whose elevation in March was the quickest in 110 years of history? 4 Which South African No 10 performed a feat equalled only by an Englishman in 1884 and an Australian in 1902?

5 Who got into double figures for the first time in his England career at the age of 32?

## THE WEMBLEY WAY

1 On what occasion did no Englishman feature in a match at Wembley which saw one team reach a half-century and their opponents fail to score?

2 Who earned a place at Wembley thanks to a strike by a Liberian? 3 Which Wembley final ended with a British coach guiding a team to victory for the first time since 1986?

4 When was an 18-year-old Englishman upstaged at Wembley by a 23-year-old Chilean?

5 Which Italian helped his side lift a trophy by scoring at Wembley for the second time in 10 months?

### WINNERS AND LOSERS

1 Whose limited talent earned them two trophies in the space of 24 hours?

2 Who scored the goal which brought back to London a trophy which his club had last won 27 years ago? 3 Who took 26 seconds off the record

and 374 yards? 4 Which Englishman triumphed at English Turn to record his first victory at only his eighth attempt?

for an annual race over four miles

### 5 When did a Tankard fail in a cup? **GROUNDS FOR DEBATE**

1 Who headed west after leaving a ground where rugby had been played for more than 130 years? 2 ...and who left a ground which had staged rugby for 112 years to move

3 Who moved from their inner-city succeeding where 17 teams before home to a £270m stadium built on them had failed? works site?

4 Why was there a chorus of "Vial- 13 successes? playing at Stamford Bridge? ninth month of the season?

# FAME FOR 15 MINUTES

Why did the following make the headlines?

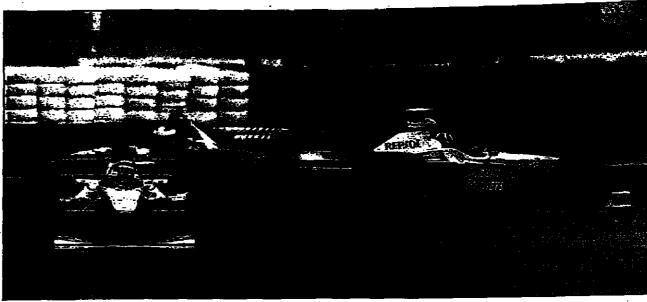
1 Simon Fenn 2 Llevton Hewitt

3 Giuliano Grazioli

4 Sean Olsson 5 Steve Simonsen



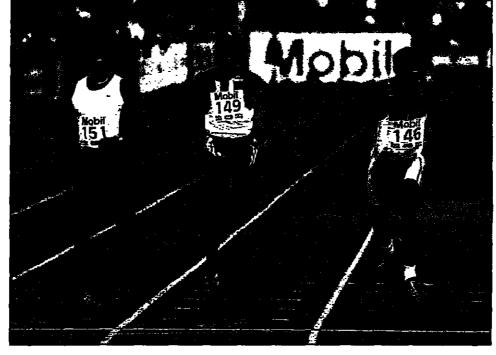














# END OF THE LINE

a chemically polluted former gas- 3 Which player paid the final penal- 17 unsuccessful attempts?

son Park when Chelsea were ending a run of 37 international

years and 146 consecutive appear-

back?

5 Who failed to win at home until the 5 Whose major run ended after 37 10 Whose nine-year winning run

promptly won their championship sequence of 13 silvers or bronzes? 2,632 consecutive returns to base 2 Who prevented a world record by dating back to 1982?

matches without a goal?

ty for failing at the 14th attempt after 8 Who cheered hearts by ending a 36-year wait for a trooby? li, Vialli" during a match at Goodi- 4 Who enjoyed double delight after 9 Whose run of 63 consecutive ap-

ended when a Swede and a Norwegian scored goals for a rival firm?

1 Which Czech went Down Under 4 Which 37-year-old bucked his in the first hour? to break his duck at the age of 30? own previous form in the event to 6 Which 27-year-old became the 2 Which 31-year-old kept his bottle inspire his team to one of the first Frenchman to triumph in Sur- within a stroke of conquering see what he needed to do, at the age ry in San Diego?

7 Which player from Belarus final- 2 Who was the 28-year-old farmer's

# **GOLDEN OLDIES**

in Bordeaux to kick his team to a

3 ...and which Australian retired 5 Which American achieved finally after kicking his team to final glory? major success at the age of 41?

ly beat her German opponent after

pearances was ended by a bad

4 Which three Britons took less than 21 seconds to clean up in Budapest? 5 At which Test match did no more

wickets fall after three went down

finishing the year in November in

Hickie end in Paris?

biggest upsets in his sport's histo- rey in June when he held off the Britain?

years did the Irishman Denis man?

daughter from Cavan who recorded Ireland's first success in Lon-Sheffield? 3 What began in Thailand in January and visited Australia, South Africa, Scotland and Dubai before

the Nationwide League in Sep- here." tember? 9 Who spent three weeks racing Shearer or The Pope, you don't do over 3,711 kilometres to become the things like that."

first Italian to triumph in Paris for 4 "I just felt in the early stages 9 "Not going past Sir Don probably 33 years?

da of English and German parents, now." gave up trying to conquer Ameri- 5 "I went out on a limb for him. I

ANSWERS, PAGE 14

THE GLOBAL GAME

# WHO SAID IT?

in with footballing neighbours who 1 Who finally won gold after a 6 ... and whose run ended after 1 What run dating back over 18 challenge of a 42-year-old Ulster- 1 "I'm going to feel every minute of see how he felt. The evidence is it this time. I can't remember the 7 Which 22-year-old Scotsman con- last two so it's going to be very nice. quered the world for the first time We're going to show the French by beating an Irishman in boys how to party."

2 "Coming from Tobago, which television viewers watch live cov- ball comes second to cricket, it erage of a First Division match in was a dream opportunity to play

3 "I don't care whether you're Alan

of the tournament he was not 10 Which American, born in Cana-quite there mentally - but he is

ca, moved to Japan, and came tried so many times to make him of 31, to deal with the modern

need to apologise. Everyone could like punching him then."

NDORRA

Sokieau ..

AUSTRIA

CANADA

Kitzbühel .....70%

Whistler......95% Fresh snow

there for everyone, for him more than anybody, of how much it hurt him and the team."

7 "I was very nervous, to be honest. I was just trying to focus my 8 Why did more than 100 million is such a small island where foot- mind, trying to stay cool, not to get excited, not to tire myself, not to worry. I knew I needed only to finish second to win the title, but that made me uncomfortable."

8 "I'm a bit of a jammy git. Tom Jenks should have ridden him." saved me from getting stabbed in the street. I reckon I get a minimum of 10 people a day coming up to me and kissing me and telling me

him. 10 "He came up to me after the match to apologise, saying he was 6 "He couldn't talk, but he didn't sorry that I had been sent off. I felt

how great it was I didn't go past

80 21.12 -2C Light snow

21.12 -50

180 215 21.12 -18C Fluries

Variable Variable

# BOXING DAY

FOOTBALL

3 O unless stoted
FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP
Arsenal v West Ham (12.0)
Blackburn v Ascon Villa (6.0)
Coventry v Tottenham
Everton v Derby
Manchester Utd v Nottm Forest
Middlesbrough v Liverpool Newcastle v Leeds ....... Sheffield Wed v Lekcester 

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE
FIRST DIVISION
Birmingham v Sheffield Utd .............
Bolton v Bradford (1.0) .................

13 Huddersheld v Grimsoy

14 josvich v Portsmouth

15 Oxford Utd v Crystal Palace

16 OPP v Norwich (12.0)

17 Stockport v Barnsley (1.0)

18 Swindon v Wolves

19 Tranmere v Sunderland

20 Watford v Bristo City (12.0)

21 West Brontwich v Port Vale (1.0)

SECOND DIVISION 22 Blackpool v Wigan (1.0) ...... 23 Bristol Rovers v Gillingham .... 24 Chester field v Oldham ..... 25 Fulham v Colchester (12.0) .... 26 Lincoln City v Macclesfield .... 27 Lincoln Reading (13.0) 27 Luron v Reading (12.0) 28 Millwall v Bournemouth (12.0) 29 Notes County v Northampton 30 Stoke v Preston

Wrexham v Manchester City (12.0) York v Burnley THERD DIVISION

34 Barnet v Plymouth (1.30) .....

35 Brighton v Brentford (12.0) ....

36 Cambridge Utd v Rotherham. 37 Cardiff v Shrewsbury (12.0)
38 Exeter v Torquay (11.0)...
39 Halifax v Darlington (2.0)
- Hull v Chester
- Leyton Orient v Swansea (1.30)

31 Walsall v Wycomb

Mansfield v Scarborough ... cunthorpe v Hartiepool . Southend v Peterborough SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

43 Rangers v 5t Johnstone. SCOTTISH FIRST DIVISION

48 Hibernian v Ayr.. SCOTTISH SECOND DIVISION
49 Alloa v Stirling
- Arbroath v Forfar
- Clyde v Partick

SCOTTISH THIRD DIVISION
Albion v Queen's Park
Brechin v Montrose
Dumbarton v Berwick loss County v Cow nuir v East Stirling FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

Doncaster v Leek ..... Famborough v Hayes Forest Green v Yeowl Gidderminster v Hereford (12.30) .... Bingstonlan v Woking (12.0) .... Jorchwich v Morecambe Southport v Barrow Stevenage v Rushden & Diamonds. Telford v Cheftenham

RYMAN LEAGUE Premier Division: St Albans v Bishop's Stortford (11.0). Albans v Bishop's Stortford (11.0).

UNIBORID LEAGUE Premier Division:
Bamber Bindge v Lancaster: Blyth Spartans v Gateshead (11.30): Chorley v
Winsford Utd; Colwyn Bay v Leigh Rivil:
Frickley v Whitby Down, Gansborough Trinity v Worksop; Guseley v Emley; Hyde Utd
v Stalybridge; Marine v Accrington Stanley; Runcom v Altinicham: Spennymoor
v Bishop Auckland First Divisions Alfreton
v Mariock; Ashton v Stocksbridge; Bradford Park Avenue v Lincoln Utd (1.0); Congleton v Burscough: Filiaton v Trafford:
Great Harwood v Farstey; Gretna v Whit-

FIXTURES ley Bay (1.0); Harrogate Town v Eastwood Town; Hucknall v Belper; Netherfield v Droylsden: Radcliffe v Wilton.

Droyksden: Radcliffe v Wilton.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE Premier Divisione Bath City v Salisbury: Bromsgrove
v Worcester City. Burton Albion v Gresley Rowers (11,30): Cambridge City v Rothweb (1.0): Gioucester City v Merthyr Tydfil;
Grambran v Wileston Town (12.0): Hasings v Crawley: King's Lynn v Boston Urd:
Nuneaton v Atherstone (12.0): Tamworth
v Halesowen Town (12.0): Weymouth v
Dorchester.

Dorchester.

PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND
LEAGUE: Brora Rangers v Wick Academy: Clachnacuddin v Forr William; Deveronvale v Buckle Thistle: Forres
Mechanics v Nainn County, Fraserburgh v
Peternead; Huntly v Cove Rangers;
Lossiemouth v Eigin Gity: Rothes v Keith.

SNURNOFF INISM LEAGUE Premier Division: Coleraine v Ballymena; Crusaders
v Cliftonville: Glenavon v Portadown; Linfield v Gientoran; Omagh v Newry, First field v Glentoran; Omagh v Newry, First Ohriston: Bangor v Ards; Distillery v Car-rick: Larne v Banyclare; Limavady v Dun-dannes Guifer

HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRE-LAND Premier Division: Finn Horps v Sigo Rosers (7.30): Shelbourne v Derry City (3 15) City (3.15).

LEAGUE OF WALES: Aberystwyth v
Haverfordwest (2.30): Bangor City v
Caemarfon Town (2.30); Bany Town v Inter Cable-Tel Cardiff (11.30); Comwy v Rhyl
(2.30); Holywell v Comah's Obay (2.30);
Newtown v Caersws (2.30); TNS
Llansant/fraid v Rhayader Town (2.30).

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE Pre-paler Division: Beckenham Town v Crockenhill (11.30). v Crockenhill (11.30):
UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES
LEAGUE Premier Distains: Boston v Hotteach (1.30): Bourne v Blackstone (1.30):
Long Buckby v Ford Sports; N Spenter v
Buckingham (12.0): Potton v Storfold
(11.0): St Neots v Eynesbury (12.0): Spakiring v Yawdey (1.0): S & L Corby v Desborough (11.30): Wellingsorough v Cogenhoe
(11.0): Weotron v Kempston (11.0).
IMNUET SUSSEX COUNTY League UNIDET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Division: Broadbridge v £ Presson: Chichester v Portfield; Eastbourne To v Langney: Hailsham v Eastbourne Utd

hampton v Wick (11.0): Little-hampton v Wick (11.0): Ringmer v Saltdean (11.0): Selsey v Pagham (11.0): Whitehawk v Shoreham. SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE PA

Spain?

MORTH WESTERN TRAINS LEAGUE First Division: Atherton Colls v Atherton LR: Cheadle v Vauchall GM: Ridsgrove v Newcaste I: Maine Road v Saffort; Moss-ley v Glossop: Nantwich v Leek CSOB: Pyrscor. v Roatle: Ramehatton

ley v Glossop: Nantwich v Leek CSÖB; Prescot v Bootle; Ramsbottom v Rossendale: Skelmersdale v St Helens; Workington v Holker (1.0). NoRTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE Premier Division: Arnold v Pontefract: Detaby v Armborpe: Glasshoughton v Buston; Hallam v Brogg (11.0); Liversedge v Eccleshill; Malitby v Ossett Alblon; North Fertiby v Shelfrield; Ossett Town v Selby (12.0); Staveley v Pickering (12.0); Thackley v Garforth.

Inackley v Garforth.

INTERCLINK EXPRESS MIDLAND ALLIANCE: Barwell v Sandwell (12.0);
Halesowen H v Pershore: Kings Norton v
Boldmere: Knypersley v Bridgnorth; Pelsall v Stourport: Rushall v Oktoury; Shirnal v Chasecown; Stapenhill v Willenhall;
Stratford v Rocester; West Midlands Police v Wednesfield. Strator v rocesser; west Midlands Police v Wednesfield.

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE First Division BAT v AFC fotton (11.0): Bemerton Heath v Whitchurch (12.0): Christchurch v Bournemouth (12.0): Cowes v East Cowes (11.30): Eastleigh v Hamble (11.0): Fareham v Gosport (11.30): Lymnigton & New Milcon v Brockenhurst (1.0): Maneyfields v Portsmouth RN (11.30): Thatcham v AFC Newbury; Wimborne v Downton (1.0).

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN

Downton (1.0).

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN
LEAGUE First Divisions Bedingran v Consett: Billingham In v Billingham Synthonia (11.0); Chester Le Street v Essington
(12.0); Gusborough wiarske (11.0); Newcastle 8 5 v Morpeth; Penrith v Tow Law;
Seaham v Dunston (11.0); Shidon v
West Auckland; South Shields v Jarrow
Roofing (11.0); Stockton v Crook.

CRICKET FOURTH TEST (Melbourne): Australia v England (First day of five), RUGBY LEAGUE

FRIENDLY MATCHES: Featherstone v Castleford (11.30); Leeds v Halifax (11.30). RUGBY UNION ALLIED DUNBAR
PREMIERSHIP ONE
Leicester v Bedford (3.0) ............
Richmond v London Irish (3.0) ....

JEMSON NATIONAL LEAGUE ONE B'harr/Soffhull v Nottingham (2.15) ...... Harrogate v Wharfedale (2.15), ..... Newbury v Lydney (3.0) ..... Octey v Morley (2.15) League Two North: Aspatria v Kendal (2.30).

WELSH MATIONAL LEAGUE
PREMIER DIVISION
2.30pm unless stated
Caerphilly v Newport
Ebbw Vale v Aberavon

Neath v Llanelli .... Trearchy v Maesteg. BANK OF SCOTLAND BORDER LEAGUE: Gala v Melrose (2.0): Hawick v Peebles (2.0): Jed-Forest v Kelso (2.0).

BASKETBALL UNI-BALL TROPHY Group A: Man-chester Glants v Tharnes Valley Tigers (7.0).

ICE HOCKEY SENONDA SUPERLEAGUE: Notting-ham Pantners v Cardiff Devils (3.0): Sheffield Steelers v Manchester Storm (3.0): Newcastle Riverkings v Ayr Scottish

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WORLDEOVER REAVEL THIS PANCE

# Hall adamant that Newcastle is not for sale

Falcons, Sir John Hall, last night dismissed speculation that he was planning to sell his 76 per cent stake in the club. As the reigning champions prepared for their Christmas campaign, their straight talking proprietor was explaining why the club was not up for sale.

"This coming year is going to be a watershed in the professional game," explained Sir John, "because it is when we expect the European Commission judgment which will give us the right to organise ourselves within the Rugby

BY DAVID LLEWELLYN

Football Union as professional

"These rights will allow us to own television broadcasting and commercial deals. And the International Rugby Board would have to recognise that they are not above European law. There is nothing in this talk of selling the club. I have fought this battle for the last three years, it would be a nonsense to pull out now."

Newcastle are, however, in

contention. They are six points adrift of the leaders, Leicester, which is likely to be eight by the time they trot out for Sunday's home match against Allied Dunbar Premiership strugglers West Hartlepool, since the Tigers tackle bottom-butone Bedford on Boxing Day.

"We are saying that this League is open," said their coach, Steve Bates. "We are not out of the hunt and in some ways we are more threatening than last year."

They will have to threaten without Gary Armstrong, the

Scotland international scrumhalf, for the next few weeks after he chipped a bone in a thumb. Without him and understudy Allen Chilten (two cracked fin-

gers), it looked as if Bates might have to dust off his boots and turn out, but at yesterday's training session Hall Charlton, an England Schools 18 Group player last season, lined up with the first-choice players and looks a good bet to start his first Premiership match. He was on the bench for the Anglo-Welsh game against Cardiff last month.

Leicester, still without the

injured Joel Stransky and Will Greenwood, field an unchanged team for only the second time this season. They will be very wary of Bedford, who, under the joint guidance of the recently departed Geoff Cooke and Paul Turner, gave the Tigers a real scare early in the season on

"They were not easy as we found down there." admitted Dean Richards. Leicester's team manager. "In fact they probably deserved to win that

their own patch.

"They countered well and down to the form of Tim Stimpplayed some expansive rugby,

we only won with a try late in landed match-clinching goals injury time." The Tigers should be a dif-

ferent proposition in front of a full house at Welford Road. But Richards is cautious and probably with good cause. "We are happy to be top," he said, "but our form before the month of internationals was far better than it is now. We have had a lot of injuries as well over the last few weeks, but we have come through it winning our last two

without Joel and Will" Much of that can be put son with the boot. The full-back against Newcastle a couple of weeks ago and followed that up with six penalties to sort out the close-fought Kingsholm contest last weekend.

At least Bedford will have the services of Jason Forster, their dynamic Wales A flanker. The player said yesterday that his proposed transfer to Pontypridd was definitely off. Forster, who is contracted to Bedford until May, has a verbal agreement with Rudi Straeuli, the club's director of rugby, which would allow him to go if a club

in Newport." explained Forster. "Having played for Wales A against Argentina I am keen to press my claim for a place in the full squad."

In Reading on Boxing Day Richmond take on a revitalised and dangerous London Irish, who ran them close in October. Richmond are still without their captain and No 8 Ben Clarke (fractured cheekbone) and the Wales lock, Craig Quinnell, is a doubt. The Exiles field the side which ended an impressive sixmatch unbeaten run by Harle-



Petra Korda in action at Wimbledon, where it has emerged he tested positive for nandrolone, a substance which can speed recovery from injury

# Korda's innocence disputed

**EXPERT OPINION was divided** yesterday as to whether Petr Korda, who tested positive for teroids during this year's.

♣teroids during this year's. Wimbledon, could have taken

the drug innocently The 30-year-old Czech, who is the reigning Australian Open champion, was stripped of the rankings points and prize money he earned by reaching the Wimbledon quarter-finals, but avoided suspension because he denied taking the drug, nandrolone, knowingly.

"I wish to state categoricaltan not a drugs cheat and would never seek to obtain a competitive advantage over my fellow professionals by such means," he said. "I am delighted that the committee has

TENNIS BY KIERAN DALEY

Dr Joe Doust, a physiologist at the Department of Sports Science in Brighton, said: "It's certainly possible he could have taken the drug without knowing. There are two ways of administering it, by injection or tablet. It's perfectly reasonable he would not know what he's taking. It's surprising how many sportsmen these days just do what they're told."

He added: "I think what happened in the Tour de France this summer shows that whatever the spiel by sports medical teams, they are the people behind doping when it happens, not the athletes."

Doust added that Korda was found it hard to believe that what was in it," McNamee said. probably given the steroid not over a long period to build muscle bulk, but to hasten recovery from injury and allow

him to train harder. In Australia, where Korda is due to defend his Australian Open title next month, experts were less ready to accept Korda's story.

Vicki Kapernick, a spokesperson for the Australian Sports Drug Agency, said nandrolone was an artificial version of the hormone testosterone which can only be injected. "It has a performance-enhancing effect and helps in musclebuilding and recovery from in-

jury while training," she said. A sports medicine practitioner. Dr Peter Larkins, said he substance he had taken.

it came from'?" Larkins said. "Elite athletes have a lot of people wanting to help them and there is a lot of shaky advice around. Maybe he could have been that naive. It just doesn't gel with me, that he didn't know what it was, especially at that level. That wouldn't get you a defence in the eyes of the International Olympic Committee."

The Australian Open tournament director, Paul McNamee, absolute minimum penalty.

"He might have been given a cocktail of some sort in an injection and not been told exactly be a minimum of two years' sus-

Korda had not known what "But it is generally not an excuse if you didn't know; it's part be three months. How often have we heard of the fabric of any sport and the story: 'I didn't know where players have got to be vigilant."

The Korda affair comes as the International Tennis Federation prepares to cast its vote for a unified anti-doping programme for sport.

The FTF will be represented at an anti-dooing conference organised by the IOC on 2 Febrnary next year, while Brian Tobin, the ITF president, attended an IOC working session on the subject in Lausanne on 27 November. "The main difsaid Korda had been given the ference in the proposed policy," Tobin said, "is that the minimum penalty for hard substances higher-class substances - would cial drugs and so on, would still "A clause was added on the

day that said any sport not adhering to this unified policy would not be able to participate in the Olympics. I had to discuss that with our partners [the men's and women's professional tours]. Having spoken to them, I don't see any problem at all, and I'm sure we'll be supporting the unified programme. "Tennis has the most com-

plete anti-doping policy of any sport, because it covers all of Mike Hussey. the professional areas, the Women's Tennis Association. the Association of Tennis Professionals' Tour, the ITE and even our junior areas. We're dead against cheats in tennis."

# **Match-fixing** probe moves to Australia

THE PAKISTANI investigation into match-fixing will sit in Australia in January to take evidence from Shane Warne and Mark Waugh.

The Australian and Pakistani cricket boards announced yesterday that the two Australian Test players, as well as Alan Crompton, the former Australian Cricket Board chairman, would go before the inquiry on 8 January.

The two players, who have accused Salim Malik, the former Pakistan captain, of offering them a bribe, were ordered to appear after admitting two weeks ago that they accepted money from an illegal Indian bookmaker for information on pitch and weather conditions during a tour of the sub-

continent in 1994. The Pakistan judge in charge of the investigation agreed to travel to Australia after the two Australians declined to go to Pakistan and attempts to set up a live video link failed.

Salim Malik has also been given the option to travel to Australia at his own expense if he wanted to cross-examine the

The ACB also announced that its own investigation into cricket and betting would begin on 12 January and was expected to last for at least three

The ACB ordered the inquiry after the admissions of Warne and Waugh and revelations by other players that they had also been approached by bookmakers both on the subcontinent and in Australia.

The ACB has been criticised for its handling of the affair after it was revealed that it kept secret details of the fines imposed on Warne and Waugh until journalists broke the story just before the third Ashes Test two weeks ago. Despite that the inquiry, beaded by Rob O'Regan QC, the former chairman of the Queensland state's Criminal Justice Commission. will be conducted in private with the findings due to be made public in February

O'Regan said he wanted to speak with everyone who had represented Australia since 1992 as well as a number of ACB

# Somerset set to pick their overseas player

SOMERSET HAVE announced a shortlist of three Australians from which they will select their overseas player for next season. The county will choose from Tasmania opener Jamie Cox, New South Wales allrounder Shane Lee and young Western Australia batsman

The Somerset chief executive, Peter Anderson, and the als. The first Test is in New Plycounty's new cricket chairman, Vic Marks, will interview all three players during the fifth Ashes Test, which starts in Sydney on 2 January. "We will insist that our overseas player is available for the season," said Anderson, determined that World Cup calls will not rob his team early next summer.

overseas recruit the chance to be captain after Peter Bowler relinquished the post earlier this month.

Michael Gough, of Durham, will captain the England Under-19s for the tour of New Zealand this winter. The 15-man squad will play three Test matches and three one-day internationmouth (2-5 February), the second in Wellington (8-11 February) and the third in Dunedin

(18-21 February)
(18-21 February)
(18-21 February)
(19-21 February)
(19-21 February)
(19-21 Flandgan (Essex), M Carberry (Surrey), R Dawson (Forks), G Haywood (Sussex), J
Maunders (Midda), M Symington (Durham), J Fearlek (Lancs), M Wallace (wkr, Glam), G Bridge (Durham), M Bulbeck (Soms) R Logan (Northants), J
Tucker (Soms), M Whiley (Notts)

# Banks attacked over new post | Sailor's Boxing Day pay-day

### AS TESSA SANDERSON joined the English Sports Council yesterday, the Sports Minister, Try Banks, was accused of sexparent determination to appoint

a woman to lead the Council. The 1984 Olympic javelin champion, who campaigns for the Labour Party, was appointed yesterday by Chris Smith, the Secretary of State at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, along with Brigid Simmonds, chief executive of Business In Sport and Leisure.

The appointments were overshadowed, though, by the allegations against Banks and Smith. The pair have rejected the recommendations of a se-Lection panel saying that the 20,000-a-year, part-time chairmanship, should be a choice between the acting chairman, Trevor Brooking, and the for-

ATHLETICS The winner of this year's London and Amsterdam marathons, Catherina McKiernan, will not be defending her Bupa Great North Cross-Country title

BASKETBALL

The Budweiser League's bottom club, Edinburgh Rocks, have signed the former Manchester Glants and Newcastle Eagles forward Michael New, The Rocks have released Brad Wedel to make room for the 30-year-old American.

BOXING WORLD BOXING ASSOCIATION SUPER-FLYWEIGHT TITLE (Nagoya, Japan) (12-rd): J Rojas (Ven) bt S lida (Japan) pts.

FOOTBALL

Rich Star Betgrade's Yugoslav in-entional midfielder Perica Ogn-jenovic is set to move to Real Madrid, according to Spanish me-dia reports yesterday, Real want to sign the 21-year-old before the Span-ish winter transfer deadline expires

By Alan Hubbard

mer world karate champion,

a five-person shortlist with

The fact that Banks and Smith have declined to accept Test cricketer, Raman Subba ing figures in sport. It is be-

# RUGBY LEAGUE

The biggest holiday derby of deep mid-winter well alone.

Leeds, who host Halifax on Boxing Day morning, have special reasons for bucking the trend. They need to get some value for money out of Wendell Sailor, who, thanks to the machinations of the rugby union authorities, is being paid for two rugby league friendlies but not for his regular appearances for Leeds Tykes.

Leatherhead 5. Puzza Cop Second round:
Basingstoke Town 3 Bognor Regis Town 0;
Harrow Borough 1 Romford 3: Walton 6;
Hersham 2 Slough Town 0. Postponed:
Wording v Aldershor Town. Us Rusdanial Trophy second round: Postponed: Abrigdon Town v Egham Town. DR MARKTENS
LEAGUE CUP First round second leg:
Gresley Rovers 0 Tamworth 4 (Tamworth win 8-1 on aggregate). Second round:
Folkestone Invitot 2: Hastings Town 1:
Grantham Town 0 Rothwell Town 0: HaleSowen Town 0 Bilston Town 2: UNIBOWED LEAGUE President's Cop Second round: Guiseley 1 Droylsden 2. Second round rounds: Guiseley 1 Droylsden 2. Second round rounds second leg: Thatcham 2 Winhorne Town 2: Moretyfields 3 Bemerton Heath 1. SCHEWIPO: DREECT LEAGUE President's Chap Second round regulage Staybridge 2 Gainsborough 1. SEMISON WIESSEK LEAGUE CLAP Second round second leg: Thatcham 2 Winhorne Town 2: Moretyfields 3 Bemerton Heath 1. SCHEWIPO: DREECT LEAGUE

Premier Division: Brisington 1 Taunton Town 3. Postponed: Bishop Sutton v Brid-port. JEMSON EASTERN LEAGUE Pre-mier Division: Newmarket Town 2 Ely City

miler Diffusion: Newmarket Town 2 Ely Cry 2: Soham Town Rangers 2 Sudbury Town 2. Postponed: Lowesoft Town v Great Yar-mouth Town. CALOR COUNTY ANTREM SHELD Discrept-Finals: Glentoria 1 Bul-

lymena (); Lame | Linfield 5. PONTING LEAGUE CUP Group Fine: Oldham | Stockport 3. AWON INSURANCE COM-

STOCKPORT 3, AVON BESTGAMEN COM-BINATION First Division: Bournemouth 4 Southampton 1; Futham 1 Wimbledon 0; Peterborough 4 Ipswich 2: Portsmouth 0 Gillingham 1; Watford 2 West Ham 2. THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP Third

# BY DAVE HADFIELD

Australia winger admits – at least when talking to league people - that he has not been particularly stimulated by his experience of rugby union. He can be expected to return to his code of choice with a sharpened appetite on Saturday.

Of greater long-term significance are the debuts of two players who, unlike Sailor, will figure in Leeds' Super League campaign. The former Great Britain hooker, Lee Jackson, will make his first appearance since arriving from Newcastle Knights.

class stand-off. He is likely to play in both roles on Saturday, although it is intriguing to see him listed to start at stand-off. Another player with a dazzling future in prospect, Kevin Sinfield, is at loose forward, with

four other members of Leeds' all-conquering Academy team among the substitutes. Halifax have newcomers of their own, notably the utility back, Graham Holroyd, signed from Leeds. The match, and the one between Castleford and Featherstone kicking off at the same time, will be the first played under the new rules

agreed by the game's international federation. That will mean reverting to the non-scoring side kicking off and rewarding long-range touch-finding kicks by giving the kicking side the feed at the subsequent scrum.

# IN BOXING DAY'S INDEPENDENT



# **FOOTBALL**

Alan Curbishley talks to Glenn Moore about Charlton Athletic's fight for Premiership

Steve Tongue on great Boxing Day matches

Plus a comprehensive guide to the Boxing Day programme, including our match-by-match



# RACING

Greg Wood assesses the field for one of the highlights of the racing year, the King George VI Chase at Kempton

Full cards for the 10 Boxing Day meetings, featuring our exclusive form guide

# **TENNIS**

John Roberts on the year of Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski

# THERE WILL be more of a his aspirations are as a high

# SPORTS POLITICS

Geoff Thompson. These were the two men on

three women - Sanderson, Simmonds and the former netball international, Sue Campbell, of the Youth Sports Trust. An announcement about the vacant post was due two weeks ago, but instead it is to be readvertised. Brooking has been asked to continue as interim chairman.

Thompson claimed yesterday he was a victim of "girl power gone mad". Thompson, 40, who is black, said: "In an age of political correctness it seems I may be the right colour but the wrong sex. In the past I've been excluded by social and

on 15 January, but with Red Star insisting on a transfer fee of around £3.2m, the European champions may decide to wait until the end of the season, when Ognjenovic becomes a free agent and can move for poshing.

comes a free agent and can move for nothing.

Mario Zagallo, the Brazilian national team coach at this year's World Cup, has signed a six-month contract as the coach of Portuguesa, a club side based in São Paulo.

PA CARLING PREMMERSHIP SUS-PENSIONS (From 23 Dec): R DI Matteo (Chelsea) one match: G Monk (Southampton) one match: G Monk (Southampton) one match: G Monk (Southampton) one match: G Monk (Prom 26 Dec): P Van Hoofdook (Nottingham F) three match: A Bohlman (Derby) one match: B Carbone (Sheff Wed) one match: M Harewood (Nottingham F) one match: M Hughes (Southampton) two matches. (From 27 Dec): P fine (Liverpool) one match: A Thompson (Aston Villa) one match: (From 28 Dec): G Mamilton (Blackburn) one match. (From 30 Dec): C Riggott (Derby) dive matches: D Peacock (Blackburn) one match.) Webberall (Leeds) one match: G Newtile (Man United) one match.

ed) one match. NATIONWIDE LEAGUE SUSPENSIONS (From 25 Dec): M Laurence (Mycombe)

ethnic identity but now it is because of gender."

the recommendation of the panel chaired by the former Row, has angered several leadlieved that Banks wanted to appoint Sanderson, 42, despite her lack of experience in sport administration, seeing her as an ideal figurehead in his campaign to secure recognition for minority groups in sport.

Richard Spring, the Opposition sport spokesman, condemned the decision to shelve the appointment. "This is absolutely shambolic and typical of the way the department is handling sport. English sport deserves the best person to run it and the appointment should be made solely on merit."

one match; L Peacock (Mansfield) one

one match: L Peacock (Mansfield) one match; B Goyle: (Shrewsbury) one match. (From 26 Dec): R Manage (Plymouth) two matches; J Chambes (West Brom) one match; P Carden (Rochdale) one match: S Leiket (Swindon) three matches; L MEBS (Bradford) one match; M Johansen (Bolton) one match; C Peridias (Chesterfield) one match; G Di Leifa (Harriepool) one match; G Aleszander (Luton) one match; J Lydiate (Scarborough) one match; D Bannard (Barnsley) one match: D Carson (Orester City) one match; B Menter (Norik) one match; From 28 Dec): P Walsham (From 28 Dec): P Walsham (From 29 Dec): Manchester () four matches; M Monington (Rochdale) four matches; M Monington (Rochdale) four matches; M Monington (Rochdale) four matches; M Stellon (Orester) one match; F Stellons (Orester) one match; TURSDAY'S LATE RESULTS

P Simpson (Barnet) one match.

THESDAY'S LATE RESULTS
AUTO WINNOSCREENS SHIELD Northern section, first round: Notts County
D Hull City 1. RYMAN LEAGUE Premier
Division: Carshalton 2 Enfield 1. League
Cup second round: Hendon 2 Gravesend
& Northfleet 1. Third round: Hampton 2

flavour of Christmas past than Christmas future as four Yorkshire clubs cling to the last sprigs of tradition by playing on Boxing Day.

them all has bitten the dust this year, having been reduced to farce when St Helens fielded a reserve side against Wigan last Christmas. At most other clubs as well, coaches and players have got their way and left the

The Brisbane Broncos and

The hugely promising Karl Pratt, signed from Feather-

stone this winter, will also make his bow. Although he played on the wing for Rovers last season,

round: Aston Villa 5 Huti City 1. Third round replays: Newcaste 3 Bury 1: Wim-bledon 2 Owford 0. E0HEBITION MATCH-ES: Catalonia XI 5 Nigena 0: Basque XI 5 Uruguay 1: Andaluca XI 2 Foreign Se-lect XI 0: Canary Islands XI 1 Latvia 0. ICE HOCKEY SEKONDA SUPERLEAGUE (Theada Newcastle Riverkings 1 Cardiff Devils 6. NPLL Phoenix 6 Devoit 2, New York Mark

MOTOR RACING The Stewart Grand Prix team yes the company by mutual agreement. Gary Anderson takes over the po-sition with immediate effect.

ZETTERS: Trable chance: 21pts (393.45; 20 f.6.45; 19 f.0.85; Four manage 220.90; Eight theoret 23,30; Four drams: 552 70. Easy Sh. 173.20. All drams trable chance: 22pts f.98.50. 21 f.3.25; Lucky numbers 7, 26, 15, 19, 1, 3. BRITTERS: Trable chance: 21pts (353.10; 20 f.3.00; 19 f.0.75; Four draws 277.00; Five aways £6.20; Eight houses £7.60.

LITTLEWOODS: Treble chance: 21pts £1,977.45; 20 £36.35; 19 £4.20; 18 £1.20 Half-time results: 21pts £1,604.30 VERNONS: Treble chance: 21pts £2,919.50; 20 £25.75; 19 £8.35 TENNIS BRITISH WTA CHRISTMAS SINGLES (Queens Club, London) Pinal: C Taylor (Oxon) bt L Jelfs (Oxon) 6-3 6-2.

**TODAY'S** NUMBER

# 66m

The number of dollars (£40m) the bank, Comerica, will pay over 30 years to put its name on the Detroit Tigers' new baseball stadium.



# England face confusing options

By DEREK PRINGLE in Melbourne

THE MELBOURNE Cricket Ground on Boxing Day can be a daunting place for any visiting team let alone one still tasting the remnants of numbing defeat as England must be. Christmas may be the season of goodwill to all men, but in Australia that does not extend as far as the England cricket team, who go into this fourth Test as rank outsiders. If Christmas cannot come too soon for some, it certainly has for England who need nothing less than a win to stay in the series.

With morale already low after conceding a 2-0 deficit in the Test series a humiliating nine-wicket defeat, coming just before a watershed Test match. was less than ideal. Speaking on the subject for the first time, the captain, Alec Stewart, echoed the scathing views previously given by the team manager, Graham Gooch.

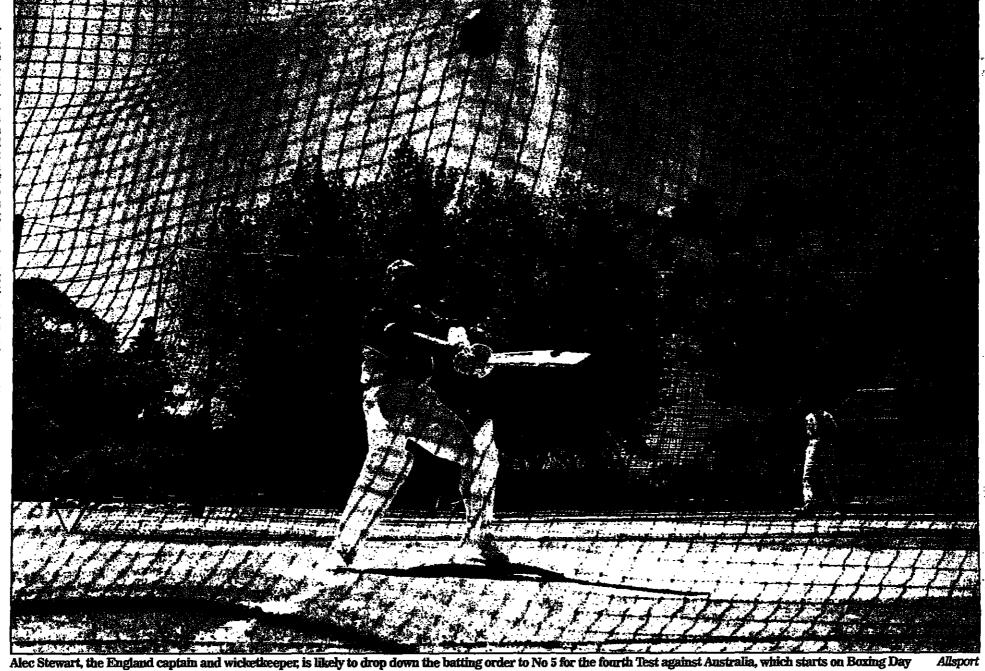
"It was probably our worst performance overseas since a certain Saturday in Sydney. eight years ago." he said. "I can accept that people can play badly, but I can't accept a poor approach.

"Playing for England, or anyone for that matter, you just don't go through the motions. We shall be sitting down and having a frank and open discussion about it before practice. After we've done that we'll look forward to the Test."

Whatever the soul searching achieves, Stewart is probably fortunate that six of the side likely to play on Saturday, were not involved in Hobart, Having half a team tarnished merely by association rather than deed will undoubtedly help speed the healing process.

That said, England will probably not name a team until Christmas Day. According to Alec Stewart the make-up of the side is likely to comprise of six batsmen and five bowlers, the option of seven batters having

"not really worked". If it sounds daring, playing six batsmen and five front-line bowlers was surely why Stewart donned the gloves in the first place. Whether it be down to Australia's all-round mastery their opponents. England's will keep the gloves, but drop against an Australian XI.



sure until 11 men walk out in front of the 80,000-strong crowd that is expected on the first day.

Even now, the "sensible" option of Stewart dispensing with the gloves and opening rumoured in Hobart but initially rebuffed here - has not entirely been rejected. Mind you, if there is a one thing the selectors like even less than losing, it is admitting they are wrong

confusion appears to have come down a place in the batting

centurions in the last match, the top six batsmen pick themselves. The bowling is less certain and unless Robert Croft Fraser for their lack of penehas come back into the reckoning the three bowlers rested in Tasmania – Darren Gough, Alan Mullally and Dean Headley - are the only ones certain to play. Which leaves two to be picked from those that or the self-inflicted doubt of and all signs are that Stewart conceded 376 for 1 in 55.2 overs

With Graeme Hick one of six cloud matters rather than elucidate them. Unless you forgive Alex Tudor, Peter Such, Dominic Cork and Angus tration and wasteful ways, the final two bowling places might just as well be pulled from

Santa's sack. Unless the pitch, in Stewart's words, is "something out of the ordinary", Tudor and Such,

When things become arbitrary, morale - and how to lift it - becomes an overriding preoccupation. Fortunately not everyone will have been affected and if anyone can put some Christmas cheer into England's gloomy festive season it ought to be Gough.

In many ways Gough, with his good nature and bonhomie. is a natural Father Christmas, both having performed well in which probably means he will their single Test outings so far, never quite make it to the more catches dropped (six)

It is not an easy task and the are favourities to complete the highest echelons of fast bowl- than wickets taken (five). But quite see Glenn McGrath getting along as well with the children as our Darren, who has already donned the white beard

> and red suit for the kiddies of Hobart. There is a general consensus, from both camps, that Gough has been unlucky this series, having regularly beaten the bat and had several catches missed. Indeed, before the first innings in Adelaide he had had

there another three chances still went begging

But is it simply luck, or does Gough lack the guile to be truly great? Physically, he is less than ideal being just under six foot. The best Test batsmen tend to get out by edging fulllength bells to either the keeper or slips. For that reason the ball needs to carry through to them. preferably between chest and knee high

England's slips may have

been guilty of standing too deep on occasions but edges from Gough, a skiddy bowler, rarely carry comfortably and the ones. that have been dropped have tended to be those that have only just carried. Gough has a low arm and a high character Fast bowling generally designands that they are the other way around

Gough, as he has done throughout his career, has borne his misfortune lightly, of at least he did until he became the culprit, dropping a fairly easy catch at long leg in Pertia

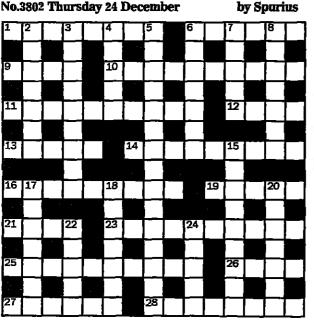
Normally, his ebullience has helped England ride their gloomier moments. Yet since that mistake, he has been noticeably less animated. No. wonder the Aussies are cock a hoop. If they can get to a char acter as naturally upbeat as Gough, intimidating the others will have been a doddle.

While England's catchi has contributed heavily to Gough's relatively low tally of wickets (10), the lack of runs from his bat has been of his own doing. Four years ago in Aus tralia, he slammed a defiant half-century at Sydney. That now seems like a mirage and he has failed to pass 20 in his last

Apart from a lack of confi dence, his problem appears to be one of balance, the York shireman having problems shifting his weight on to either front foot or back. You can get away with being in limbo against Durham or Sussex, but not against McGrath or Stuart MacGill, at least not for long enough to make a significant contribution.

If six batsmen are to get enough runs for the bowlers to be able to apply real pressure on Australia, someone in the bottom five will have to stay with one of them. If Googh wants more wickets, scoring some runs may be as important as others taking their catches. Western Australian fast bowler, Matt Nicholson, into their squad for the fourth Test following the withdrawal of Jason Gillespie with a knee injury. Nicholson has enjoyed a resurgence this season after struggling last year with an illness which left him feeling permanently tired. He claimed 7 for 7 and scored an unbeaten halfcentury against England for his

# THE THURSDAY CROSSWORD



ACROSS Police involved in sec-ond series of exercises in wood (6) Content of programme chosen - repeat (4) Callow youth in bid to

11 Easily managed trailer, not very heavy (10)
12 Arrange for woman to leave hospital (4) 13 Nag, one taking part in fox-hunt (5) 14 Where one would expect to find his nibs? (3-6) 16 Leave after entering rowdy scene, making no

Promissory note accepted by north London outby sailor (4)

Thick slice of cake is left 7 by sailor (4) by sailor (4)
23 Old means of persuading seamen to use hitches, initially (10)
25 Set out with ill-assorted carload of priests (10) 26 Press husband to make an end of the matter (4) Woodcutter from

> You find it in the upper part of the wood (?) Orange river I'd crossed it forms part of the state border (3,6) Power associated with

Switzerland is found ly-

ing beside railway (6) 28 Soft furnishing (8)

Attempt at concealment after spilling the salt (7) Weapon conveyed in sack (5) House army supremo in church - it's cold and dark (4-3) Boy receiving a punch staggering around plat-form (6,3) 17 Free from restraint, pawnbroker with money

crack of dawn? (7.8)

gives away a couple of hundred (7)

18 Stronghold in which army's besieged by El Cid, maybe (7) Essavist takes an age penning document about queen (7) 22 Bishop not so frequently having to pronounce benediction over (5) logarithm, frequently (5) 24 Fail to justify religious Being hard at it from the opinion, mostly (5) opinion, mostly (5)

favour winger Lee Sharpe. FA's generosity was an attempt Sharpe has spent a month on to influence Woravi, Thailand's Day in order to be registered in the sidelines after being trans-Fifa representative. fer-listed by manager David Liverpool's manager, Gérard Another Fifa official is think-

Platt moves for Sharpe

talks today to make his first signing - Leeds United's out-of-

DAVID PLATT is due to open

O'Leary, who made it clear the 27-year-old did not figure in his future plans. But Platt, who took over as Sampdoria's new coaching superviser last week, will look to take Sharpe on loan until the end of the season with a view to a permanent deal.

Blackburn are closing in on Ashley Ward. Rovers have been given permssion by Barnsley to speak to the striker, and the £4.5m deal - which will land Ward a £300,000 payment – should be completed by the weekend.

Blackburn want Ward eligible for the FA Cup tie with Charlton Athletic in the New Year and he would need to sign on Boxing

By Alan Nixon

Houllier, was given a boost in his move for Milan's German goalkeeper Jens Lehmann last night when Borussia Dortmund said he was too expensive at £1.5m. Aston Villa, resigned to losing

Mark Bosnich under the

Bosman ruling, have been alerted to the availability of Germany's second-choice keeper. Thai Football Association officials have denied that the FA paid part of the salary of Thailand's coach, Peter Withe, to bribe them to vote for England's

2006 World Cup bid. "I confirm that the English FA have never requested any commitment for such assistance."

Woravi Makudi, secretary general of the FA of Thailand, said. Reports had suggested that the

ing of asking North Korea to stage two matches in the 2002 World Cup. Chung Mong Jun, head of the South Korean football association and a Fifa vicepresident, said there were plans

to field a joint North-South Korea

team in the tournament, which is being co-hosted with Japan. Arsenal's plans to sign the Nigerian international Nwankwo Kanu have had to be put on hold because the Internazionale striker, who was due to arrive on loan for the rest of the season with a view to a £4.5m transfer.

is to undergo cartilage surgery. England have moved up two places in the Fifa world rankings places below their end-of- year ranking for 1997. Scotland have slipped two places to 38th

Bruce Grobbelaar has parted company with Lincoln City after two appearances for the Second Division club. The Zimbabwean interna-

tional's Sincil Bank career lasted 12 days after signing on a non-contract basis from Ryman League Chesham United. He spent the days between his two games travelling to Zimbabwe for international duty, and the club needs more commitment. Grobbelaar is wanted by Zimbabwe to become assistant

coach to Clemens Westerhof. Newcastle United's Georgian midfielder Temur Ketsbaia has retired from international football. Ketsbaia said his decision was prompted by differences with the coaching staff.



state in the drawn tour match

at the WACA last month.

Sharpe: Sampdoria target

Wolves have agreed terms with Havard Flo, the Norwegian striker who headed his country's goal against Scotland in the World Cup and is available for £750,000 from Werder Bremen.

West Bromwich Albion have moved closer to sharing the Hawthorns with Moseley rugby union club next season after a productive exploratory talks between senior officials.

# Davis and Co fall short of clean break

SNOOKER'S OLD guard just clung on to power yesterday, ensuring that an uneasy peace at best will break out within the sport, even if there is an end to the current in-fighting.

Former world champions. Steve Davis and Dennis Taylor, and Jason Ferguson, who wished to overthrow the current chairman, Rex Williams, were elected on to the board of the governing body at the World tred on snooker's inability to Professional Billiards Association's annual meeting yesterday

but will be in a minority. The vote by the 77 eligible members in a Birmingham hotel also formally elected co-said: "I didn't want to be part of opted directors Ray Reardon a split board. I didn't think that ated by those with self-interests.

SNOOKER

BY GUY HODGSON

and Jim McMahon which ensures Williams will have a fourthree advantage in the board room. The dissenters have gained influence but not power uct. It appeals to all ages."

After the five-hour meeting both sides called for a settlement of differences which censecure sponsors even though the sport commands high television figures. Terry Griffiths. who withdrew his candidature midway through the afternoon,

was the best thing for the members or for me. Taylor added: "We don't need

all this haggling and fighting because it's not healthy... Now that Steve, Jason and myself are on the board we can take the game forward. Snooker's a great prod-

Williams, whose own position of chairman was not up for reelection but who could have been ousted if another rebel had been voted in, was also placatory. "Everybody should be pleased with the outcome. There will be no problems created by me but I don't know what problems might be cre-

I was disappointed Terry with- director, Ann Yates, who had drew his name because he would have given us a better balanced board. Now we have got to try and get some unity into the game. There is no animosity between myself, Steve and Dennis."

Snooker, politically never the most benign of environments, has been racked with division since Jim McKenzie, the chief executive, was removed from office a year ago. He is suing the WPBSA for breach of contract, a case that will be heard in the High Court on 11 January, but he is by no means the only casualty of the civil war that has erupted since. The tournament

worked in the sport since 1976, and Bruce Beckett, head of media relations, left the governing body during the summer after clashing with Williams while the sport's Independent on Sunday correspondent, Clive Everton, has had his life membership of the WPBSA revoked and been denied normal press facilities at tournaments. Further trouble could be ahead, too, because Sindhu Pulsirivong, president of the Thai Snooker and Bil liards Association, has threatened to prevent tournaments. taking part in Thailand if Williams remains in power.

trouble (9)

19 Note objection about

Colour Print, St Albans Road, Warford

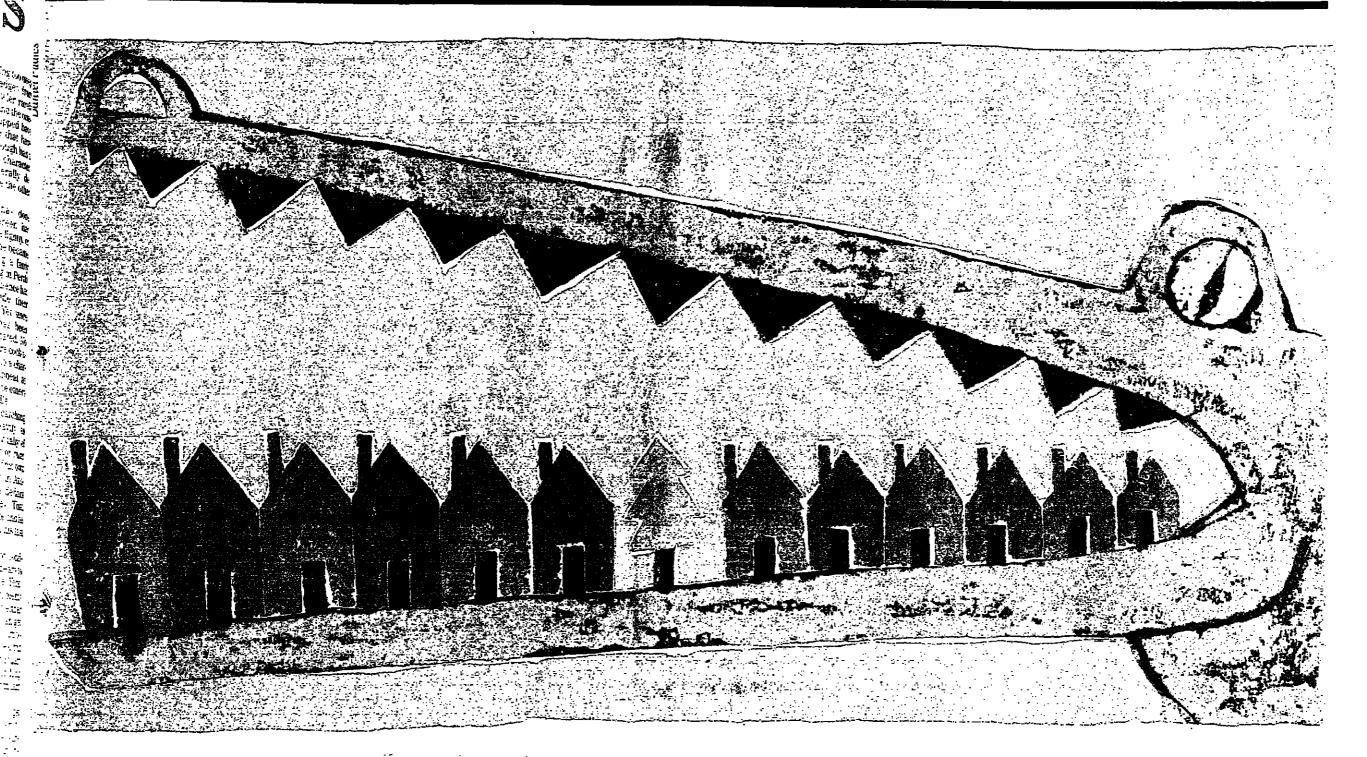
plant's store of reserves 5

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# IURSDAY REV

ARTS • LISTINGS •



# Gilstrap, the homesick explorer

the evidence of baboons, Gilstrap had noticed, because the noisy creatures loved squatting in the branches, cracking a tamarind seed, and a smile, with each bite of their doggy teeth. You could not camp within 50 feet of a tamarind. But Gilstrap was not dismayed. "There it is!" he said, with heery fatalism, and tugged his moustache. He

The Two-Toed Tumbo people were the object of this quest, yet as an explorer he knew that such a journey was a continuous series of startling confrontations of which the baboons chewing in the limbs of the tamarind were just one. This was the Zimbaba, the lower river.

It was not Mudford, the home he had left too long ago even to remember the names of its trees, nor any of the people there, except the ones who had tormented him as a youngster, and the woman who waited for him in vain. Her name was Elveera Howie. Mudford was the past and, like all such distant memories, it was unreal and a little absurd, a sort of toy-town he had abandoned, when he was Freddie Gilstrap from Webster Street.

Gilstrap the explorer had a taste for hardships but could not abide nuisances, which was why he alled Mudford and why he had stayed away. Elveera was just an encumbrance, because she would not leave the hideous town.

Christmas was coming. Good! He was where he wanted to be, on the other side of the earth. In Central Africa, beneath the tamarinds and winterthorns of the Zimbaba banks. Gilstrap knew that had he been anywhere else, he would be yearning to be back here on the Zimbaba.

Sometimes, trekking alone in the heat along the river bank he was able, in his stupor of satisfaction, to recover his dislike of Mudford. There was, first of all. Elveera Howie, supporting herself by giving music lessons in the parlour of her house near Craddock Bridge, adjacent to the Interstate; and the Interstate itself, looming over the town, illuminating Mudford with its glaring lights at night and, with that traffic, drowning the music of Elveera's strings. Mudford was never silent, nor ever dark.

The pillars of the Interstate attracted graffiti, and beneath the arches were strange encampments of drifters and drunks. Then there were Gilstrap's hatreds: the litter, the filthy black seats of a Mudford taxi and the meaningless smile of the driver Some-

# A SHORT STORY FOR CHRISTMAS BY PAUL THEROUX

one at a soda fountain slurping a drink or loudly to tidy the tent pegs, could not rise from his heels. chewing ice. Circus animals, baseball hats on backwards, the exultant insincerity of The Mudford Messengeт. Dirty hands, cold eyes, billboards, bad breath, most flags. The person who rested a damp drinking-glass on a book cover, and bus fumes, and the idiot laughter of someone watching TV. Mayor Mazzola, Dr Enid Hugo the dentist, Hump his neighbour's lab - just one of Brimble's slobbering dogs. Elveera's cat Morris, most children, and - in this season - everything to do with Christmas, from the Christmas carols monotonously repeated in elevators and the overstuffed Santa ambushing him from every Mudford street corner, to the topheavy Christmas trees on their wobbly stands.

Gilstrap craved new sights, and in Africa he was thrilled when he reflected, I have never been here before, and better, Nor seen anything like

Even better, Nor has anyone else.

He was altogether a satisfied man. He was more than fifty, but could pedal that many miles on his bike in half a day, and not only could do that number of push-ups as well but often did. On any quest, he said, the principal thing was never to look back. His bearers saw him down the Zimbaba from

Chambo in dugouts - the river was down, the heavy rains were not due until mid-December - and just above Kawaba he paid off his bearers and sent them back, and struck out on his own, the low scrub smacking his puttees.

And while Gilstrap marched he heard a child's bratty voice call out, "Go away!"

"On the contrary. He spoke pompously, to make his point, yet was somewhat self-conscious at finding himself replying to a bird in a tree. It was, of course, a

"I am staying." Because, Gilstrap reflected, it was a land without Christmas trees, nor any suggestion of home; it was, in a word, not Mudford. He had spoken indignantly and it seemed significant that there had been no answer, so the bird had quite seen his point. One afternoon, he pitched his tent and, squatting the command made him pensive.

He toppled forward, used the last of his strength to zip the flapping door, and there he lay, under canvas, twitching like a monkey. He was very cold. He shivered. He grew warm. His brain ached, his skin was scorched, he panted, he slept, he saw doggy demons with chewed fur and red eyes; he saw cranky birds on black trees with beaks like scissors; then he saw nothing, for he felt that his eyes were being

boiled in their sockets. When the fever finally passed, Gilstrap crept from his tent, weak and thirsty, and knelt at the river bank. He saw a troop of baboons all tangled in the tamarinds. The baboons joined him, scoop-splashing the water to their mouths as Gilstrap did - the Zimbaba was clean enough to drink.

Ranged on the bank, the baboons regarded him with dripping faces, but what struck Gilstrap most of all was the way the baboons separated into lit-tle families, mother and child and frowning father, just the way Mudford families picnicked at Hickey Park or rested by the banks of the Mystic River, near Craddock Bridge, at Christmas. Now he remembered that fragment of Mudford and sighed.

Resuming his hike, he saw a crocodile on a sand bank with its mouth wide open, and a white-feathered egret approached it, and Gilstrap was put in mind of Dr Enid Hugo, the dentist, and her long legs and white smock. The egret did a most dentist-like thing, tilted her head and drilled expertly between the crocodile's teeth, foraging as she cleaned them. He remembered the garrulity of Dr Hugo, though perhaps her questions were no worse than

the insistent egret. A roly-poly hippo, not far away, raised itself be-fore Gilstrap and seemed to smile, and Gilstrap was put in mind of a well-padded Santa, shaking with laughter, on a Mudford street corner. But the Santa was the more harmless of these buffoons. Even trotting busily along the banks, the hippos looked like shoppers and they munched in the

herbage like mothers at lunch. "Go away!" he heard, and it was repeated. He knew it was another Go-Away Bird, yet now

Gilstrap pushed on, picking the odd guava and watching the slow-footed progress of his dusty boots, to the doubtful encouragement of the Monotonous Lark and the screech of the Racquet-tail Roller in their tumbling acrobatics.

Towards nightfall, camped by a kopje, he felt a pair of eyes upon him - a warthog receding - indeed backing directly into his hole. Yet Gilstrap did not see the tusks and the hairy nostrils, the bristly face nor the oversized head, but the sweeter and sillier face of Hump, the lab, settling into his dog-bed with

the same tentative inquiry of his hindquarters. Not twenty feet away, another wart-hog was also reversing: this one, with a snout like a hood ornament, looked like an old Chevy, specifically that of Ed Brimble, Gilstrap's Mudford neighbour, as he fas-

tidiously backed into his garage.

Gilstrap woke and crawled from his tent to see Aunt Torn at breakfast, nodding at her spinster sisters, Grace and Trudy. But no: though they had many Gilstrap features - solemn and long-faced and leggy - it was a trio of Marabou Storks, at work on the remnants of the food Gilstrap had unwisely left out last night. They had just about finished his provisions, and had punished the horde of guavas he

had gathered. Put distinctly in mind of Mudford at that juncture, he saw something Wagnerian in the Cape Buffaloes, which looked like an entire cast of Parsifal at the Mudford Opera. Reminiscing in this way Gilstrap hardly noticed the eland beneath their horns, so lyre-like you half expected the phantom hand of a lovely woman - Elveera's perhaps - to reach out and pluck them and fill the air with the

plangency of this chord. Yet there was no music here. There was all of Africa, and not the chirping of birds but their sud-den utterances, the Go-Away Bird with its command, and even more orders from the Mourning Dove, which repeated, "Work harder, work harder!" and at noon, "No farther, no farther!" and at nightfall, "Drink lager, drink lager!"

In his already crapulous state, Gilstrap heard and obeyed and, listening for more, heard the Laughing Dove laughing and a Spotted hyena yakking like a boasting child. Stumbling in the darkness, he shone his torch and saw a porcupine like a potscrubber and a Night Ape lurking like Mayor Mazzola, and a large ripe artichoke. The artichoke made him hungry - and a bit homesick, too, for the last artichoke be had eaten at Elveera's in Mudford but, before he could feast on this one, he saw it revealed as a pangolin.

Onward in the morning on more reluctant feet, he saw a squirrel and he was back in Hickey Park, but it was just a bush squirrel, nor as glossy or as well-fed as the Mudford squirrels. He saw more families of Mudford picnickers, but they were troops of Chacma baboons. Nor was that creature Morris the cat, but instead a frolicking, clawless ofter, drying itself on a rock; that coiled coach-whip an Egyptian cobra, that coat-rack on the pretty patterned carpet a Goliath heron standing in a backwater in a small sea of byacinths.

"Go Away," cried the Go-Away Bird. He glanced up and saw a Fish Eagle and, for an instant, was in the Mudford Post Office, standing under the American Eagle, getting his mail, which at this season would have been a stack of Christ-

Yet the Hooded Vulture was a hooded vulture, the tse-tse flies were tse-tse flies, the crocs crocs, the bats bats, the sunlight's shattering flash like the swipe of a golden sword. Gilstrap knew he ought to have been nearer to the object of his quest, and yet he seemed no nearer.

He turned inland, away from the river bank, in desperation and what he saw made him pine for Mudford: as far as he could see were Christmas trees. Pine trees here? Yes, the trees were gorgeous their green boughs beautifully decorated with bright trinkets. Gilstrap wept at their symmetry and their colour, and even at the way they so explicitly wobbled on their stands.

Through his tears of homesickness, how was Gilstrap to know that these were the Two-Toed Tumbo People in their ceremonial cloaks, which were contrived from the feathers of the Green-Backed Heron and the Green Sandpiper, the Emerald Cuckoo and the Olive Bee-eater, and hung with ornaments?

"Go Away," cried the Go-Away Bird.
This time Gilstrap obliged, leaving his time and

his camp stool and his puttees and his tent, and fled upriver to Chambo, and caught the night bus, the first of many journeys that brought him back to Mudford and his love.

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Leaders and comment Features

Obituaries & Gazette <u>Arts</u>

Christmas Day TV Satellite & Radio Today's TV

**TI FILMS OF 1998** 

## Star of Bethlehem

Sir: There have been several astronomical explanations for the Star of Bethlehem. Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) suggested the star was a conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn in 7BC (Saturday Essay, 19 December). In the present century alternative suggestions have included a comet or a nova.

None, however, fits the scant account of this event in the Gospel according to Matthew II: 2-12: ...the star which they [the Wise Men] saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood where the child was..." A "star" travelling across the sky in this way and seemingly standing still over a particular terrestrial location cannot easily be reconciled with a nova, comet or planet.

There is a growing body of evidence to support a theory originally advocated by Victor Clube and Bill Napier that the history of our civilisation has been punctuated by episodes of cometary missile impacts. (See Clube and Napier, The Cosmic Winter, Blackwell Oxford 1990; F Hoyle and N C Wickramasinghe, Life on Mors: the case for a cosmic heritage, Clinical Press, Bristol, 1997). Such events would have played a crucial role in the evolution of myths as well as religious beliefs.

An impact event of this type involving the explosion in the atmosphere of a small cometary missile occurred in Tunguska, Siberia, this century The Russian newspaper Sibir of 2 July 1908 reported, from a vantage point some distance from the epicentre of the explosion: "Early in the minth hour of the morning of June 30 a very unusual natural phenomenon was observed here. In the village of Nizhne-Karelinsk ... the peasants saw a body shining very brightly. indeed too bright for the naked eye, with a blue-white light ... "

This bears comparison with a medieval account of a "fireball event", cited by Victor Clube, Bill Napier and Mark Bailey: "A very terrifying apparition and sign of wonder has been seen in Bamberg and Liechtenfels. In the year 1560, on 28 December, [this apparition) was seen in the sky which first had its beginning over Eberssberg in Franconia, and rose directly over Zeyl, and then from Zeyl [moved] towards the town call Elpmann ... and stopped still there for a long time."

Recent archaeological evidence from sites in Tunisia and Sweden points to an asteroid impact in the Middle East around 1000BC British Archaeological Reports S728, 1998). This would accord well with Old Testament accounts of the destruction of Jericho, which are stones raining down from the skies, and where Joshua is said to have bid the sun to stand still in the sky (Old Testament, Book of Joshua). What Joshua must have seen was clearly not the Sun standing still, but the distant glow of an immense fireball. One might wonder whether the account in Matthew of the Christmas Star is an event of a similar kind, although smaller in scale and viewed at a safe distance of perhaps a hundred kilometres.

Several early Christian writers have referred to the extraordinary nature of the Star of Bethlehem. For example in the second century Ignatius of Antiochia in an Epistle to the Ephesians XIX wrote thus: "The star was so bright that its light was unspeakable and its newness caused astonishment ... a new star unlike any of the other well-known planetary bodies ...

This might well have been another example of a Tunguska type event - a fragment of a comet approaching the Earth, entering the atmosphere and eventually exploding in the skies over the Middle East some distance away from Bethlehem. A cometary missile impact, of the kind that has punctuated history since the end of the last Ice Age, would then have

heralded the birth of Jesus Christ. On such a picture one would also expect a multitude of smaller meteoroids to follow the larger cometary missile. It is then easy to understand how the resulting

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address.

Letters may be edited for length and clarity



Dressing the Cathedral No 4: Arranging the lights on Ely cathedral's 42-foot tree

Brian Harris

spectacle of a great meteor shower came to be immortalised as a "host of angels". Professor CHANDRA WICKRAMASINGHE Cardiff

## Rattle fights on

Sir. In light of your report "Rattle to quit Labour's musical desert" (21 December), I wanted to put the record straight.

I do not feel that the UK is an artistic desert, but rather a parched garden in need of attention. It seems that the first drops of water are on their way, needed grant increases to some of our orchestras, and the setting up of the Youth Music Trust to start dealing with some of the problems

of instrumental teaching provision. We in the arts community are all a little punch-drunk after years of cuts and freezes, but I hope we are not so damaged that we cannot give credit where it is due. The Government has at least started to do something to repair the damages to the arts in the UK, and we need to welcome that.

There is still much to be donethe latest figures show that over £60m has been lost from music education over the last seven years. I and my colleagues will continue to shout until our companies are healthy once more, and until the grotesque inequalities of educational provision are tackled.

But not all criticism implies opposition - let us encourage the Government to carry on rebuilding the arts, while constantly reminding them to get a move on, before it's too late! SIr SIMON RATTLE London, WC2

Sir: I was saddened to learn that Sir Simon Rattle may leave the

I, too, despair of the future of school music. In many primary schools, the whole of the morning sessions are now given over to Maths and English. So all the rest of the subjects - science, ITC, geography, history, music, art, PI, drama and RE - jostle for a precious place in the shorter afternoon sessions.

Last term. I conducted a straw

poll among 60 of my students training to be primary teachers. Only a handful had been given an opportunity to observe or teach a music lesson on their school placement; the rest had found music elbowed out of the curriculum to almost vanishing point. One school's classroom music consisted of half an hour a term for each class.

Each day your Gazette lists over half of whom have attained distinction in those very curriculum areas which are now being marginalised: music, drama, sport, religion and art. What a chilling thought that, in 50 years' time, your birthday Gazette might be reduced to a dreary list of MPs, lexicographers and accountants. BARBARA POINTON

## Thriplow, Cambridgeshire Bishop vs BBC

Sir: I find the recent letters from the Bishop of St Albans (21

December) quite astounding. He seems unable to accept that Christianity represents only a minority of people in this country and imagines that the BBC's

unimaginative in his response

to Christmas day ("Fairy lights

December). He could tell his

children a ghost story or sing

The Village Pump or take them

round the garden looking at the

sleeping plants. Christmas for

children can be a magical time.

The preceding three months

hear most adults complaining

about Mammon and the truth of

Christmas being hidden behind

commercialism. I don't see why

we can't all take responsibility

for our own Christmas. Decide

and surgical strikes", 21

Sir: John Walsh is

unwillingness to give more time to the religious significance of Christmas is due to fear. Fear, not only about the ratings war, but also of religious concepts of death, eternity, mercy or human meaning.

How much television does he watch? These topics are dealt with frequently, although not necessarily from the Christian point of view.

Does the bishop believe that Muslims, Jews and other religious leaders would be justified in complaining when their views are not aired as appropriately as they consider fit? And what about

It seems to me that it is the bishop who is bewildered about his and Christianity's purpose, not the BBC about its purpose. ALAN GOLDING Brookmans Park, Hertfordshire

Sir: The complaint that the BBC gives inadequate coverage of Christianity got an inadequate reply from the head of BBC Religion (Right of Reply, 18 December). The BBC does indeed give inadequate coverage not only of Christianity but of all religion, despite the large number of radio and television programmes on the subject, because they hardly attempt more than a superficial expression or examination of any religious doctrines or practices.

IN BRIEF

how you could enjoy the

CLARE HARDING

Stansted Essex

enforced festive season and

make it meaningful for you.

Celebrate the solstice, celebrate

vour family, or celebrate Christ.

Sir: You readers may like to be

warned. Recently we planned

Blackfriars, a straight enough

to take the Thameslink train

direct journey of just under

from Flitwick to London

However, Christians would get more sympathy from non-Christians if they showed more awareness of the equally inadequate coverage of all such doctrines and practices. Moreover, considering that only one tenth of the population are observant

members of any religious denomination, the BBC also gives inadequate coverage of nonreligious beliefs and behaviours. The best solution would be the abolition of the institution called

"BBC Religion" and the establishment of a new department devoted to proper coverage of all serious metaphysical and moral credal and multi-cultural society. This could produce programmes enthusiastically expressing the celebration of major religious festivals, Christian and non-Christian, but also programmes critically examining the background to such events, without the constant bias towards the mainstream of the Christian tradition. NICOLAS WALTER Rationalist Press Association London N1

# Grow old gratefully

Sir: You carry yet another article on the negative aspects of ageing ("And now I am old", 22 December). This is certainly more than one too many.

one hour. We had not got the Thameslink timetable to hand so we tried Railtrack on the web. The result was a choice of journey times ranging from iust over two hours to threeand-a-quarter hours, but you do take in Bedford (north of Flitwick), London St Pancreas, London Bridge, London Cannon Street and, eventually, London Blackfriars; four changes, three trains and two tube journeys later. ARTHUR BOURNE FIONA BOURNE Flitwick, Bedfordshire

Certainly poverty and ill health prevent many people from enjoying their later life, but many retired people enjoy the freedom from the responsibilities of work and family. Even some with potentially serious illnesses can enioy themselves as so many treatments are available to keep illness under control.

We have to be a little bit old to become grandparents and enjoy the many new adventures that this brings us. It also gives us an element of immortality to see certain aspects of our own personality pass to future generations.

grandparent gave my greatgrandmother, my grandmother and my mother and father a great deal of pleasure; it is something which I can look forward to with optimism. MARGARET BEITH Guilden Sutton,

# **Debt to De Freitas**

Sir: I was one of the greatest admirers of Helen de Freitas, who was a most remarkable and talented lady. She demonstrated in all that she did a most charming manner and a formidable intelligence. I hope therefore that you will allow me to correct one thing in your excellent obituary by Leonard Miall (17 December).

Lady de Freitas did not, at any time, organise meetings to help elect our present Speaker, the Rt Hon Betty Boothroyd MP, even though they were great friends. What she did do, at a most important time in the Labour Party, was to host meetings of National Executive Committee members to work on various problems we were experiencing.

I hope you will allow me to put on record what an enormous debt we all owe to her. GWYNETH DUNWOODY MP (Crewe and Nantwich, Lab) House of Commons London SW1

# Our brutal friends

Sir: As the dust of the last week's futile bombing raids on Iraqi towns : and bases settles and we move into the hopefully reflective period of Christmas and year end, it might be an appropriate moment to ponder on the Government's dealing with Iraq and its next-door neighbour, Iran.

All year there has been the spectacle of our Foreign Office sidling up to the murderous mullahs (who are suddenly handing out oil contracts), lauding by turn the new "liberalism" perceived to be prevailing under President Khatami and his "rule of law". Salman Rushdie is publicly mollified (and privately gagged) and there is a scramble to comply with Tehran's orders to "close down" all groups working from this country purported to be in opposition to the Iranian government (first in line being the UK-registered charity Iran Aid; after 15 years of rescuing children orphaned by the regime its funding has been cut off).

On the other hand Saddam Hussein continues to be presented as number one Bogeyman, the sledgehammer comes out again to crush him and his people and Iraqi opposition groups are invited to tea in Whitehall.

Make no mistake, the regimes in question are still equally horrible, so we could ask, which of the two diametrically-opposed policies is the "ethical" one - or are they both? BELINDA McKENZIE Friend of Iran Aid London N6

Sir: The Prime Minister's behaviour in the bombing of Iraq reminds me of the one character that is more despicable than a bully. That is the person who tags along and joins in with the bullying - the person who takes no risk because the bully will be there to hide behind in the unlikely event of the victim turning on them. MICHAEL COYLE London N21

### Modern desires

Sir: Sam Arnold-Forster (letter, 10 December) cites Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - "everyone has the right to work" - in criticising the free market and increasing unemployment.

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This is to confuse two completely different concepts: the right to work and the right to a job. The former is conferred by the UDHR, the latter is an excuse for disastrous centrally-controlled economies.

In any event, it is patently not true that "what most people want is a humble job and the ability to people want a great deal more than that. If most people genuinely had such humble desires then the free

market could and would provide it. People actually want the fastest car, the newest trainers and the most fashionable clothes.

The free market is a tool, not an. end in itself. If it results in a society. which is unfair, harsh, greedy auth selfish then it is merely reflecting the attitudes of the members of that society. DANIEL BROMILOW

London NW3

# Christmas jeer

Sir. Given that the function of the Paymaster General is to "provide a banking and pensions service for government departments and other public bodies", perhaps Geoffrey Robinson should be congratulated for providing a £370,000 loan to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. In addition to showing an unquestionable level of duty, he has a praiseworthy achievement to his credit in the resignation of Mr Mandelson. TIM CROSSLAND

Romsey, Hampshire

Sir: Two ministers resign in one day - there is a Santa Claus after TONYFLANAGHAN

# Traditional festive fun to make the family crack(er) up

IT HAS been my experience in recent years that Christmas crackers are not what they used to be. In my youth we used to get really good things in crackers - not just hats, but also good toys such as metal

puzzles, indoor fireworks, and so on. The only good thing I have got out of a cracker recently was a key ring with one of those black bulbs attached which, when you press it, lights up and unlocks your car from a distance, and sets off other people's car alarms. What was nice about this was that, being a cracker present, it only lit up - it didn't unlock anything - so it gives my keys a plutocratic look without

committing me to anything. (Indeed, even 12 months later the red light is still working, so I have occasionally been able to use it as an emergency torch to find very small things such as the

ignition on the car...> But one thing that has never changed since my youth is the quality of the jokes in crackers. They were bad then, and they are bad now. In fact, I suspect they are still the same jokes, the same schoolboy puns such as "What did the carpet say to the desk? "I can

see vour drawers!" It has occurred to me that in this last issue before Christmas Day I might be doing a public service by providing some new cracker jokes, so over the weekend I programmed the mighty Independent computer to do some updated Christmas cracker jokes.

I fed into it the basic history of British jokes, a few hundred old matchboxes and a simple rundown of the last year's news, and

asked it to come up with some new jokes which you, the readers, could easily cut out and insert into the end of your Christmas crackers for the delectation of all the family. Here is what it provided. I think you will agree that the quality maintains all the awfulness of yesteryear.

Q. Why should Peter Mandelson always be accompanied? A. Because he should never be left alone (a loan).

Q. What is the difference between denationalisation and Tariq Ali? One is privatisation and the other is Private Eye's Asian.

Q. What do you call Richard Bran-



**MILES** KINGTON

The jokes in crackers were bad then and are bad now - I suspect they are still the same jokes

son spending Christmas Day over Chinese air space? A. Virgin on the ridiculous!

Q. Why is the station at Southendon-Sea like the House of Lords? A. Because it is the end of the line for the piers (peers).

Q. Why is the abdication of the Queen like a heart attack? A. Because they are both a shock to the constitution.

Q. What is the motto of the Royal Family? A. Never say Di.

Q. Why is Queen Elizabeth II like someone sitting reading in the lavatory?

A. Because they are both determined to stay on the throne as long as possible.

As the computer seemed to be building up something of a fixation with the Royal Family here, I had to instruct it to keep off Buckingham Palace, and move off in a different direction

Q. Why, at the Rio ecological summit, did President Clinton refuse to cut down on nocturnal emissions? A\_ (Censored.)

Q. Why is Luciano Pavarotti like the Millennium Dome? A. They both occupy an immense

area (aria). Q. What does General Pinochet

A. That it should be Chile for the

want for Christmas?

Q. What do the Foreign Secretary's private detective and the Chancellor's private detective do on the beach during their summer holidays? A. They stand around in the bak-

ing sunshine and watch Robin Cook and Gordon Brown!

Q. What do Beijing and voyeurism have in common? A. They both used to be called Peking (peeking).

Q. How do you get rid of the boss of Harrods? A. You tell him: "You're Fayed!"

Let me know how the jokes went down with the family. Pil pass it on to the computer

# Hard lessons to be learned from a very public downfall

THE SWIFT offer, and prompt acceptance, of Peter Mandelson's resignation at least shows that New Labour can act decisively. That will probably seem little comfort to ministers. This is the greatest blow that the Government has suffered since it came to power. Losing the very architect of New Labour over such a stupid and sloppy mistake, the destruction of one of the Prime Minister's closest allies is nothing short of a disaster for Mr Blair's "project".

This highlights the Prime Minister's failure to act decisively earlier in the year, and sack the Paymaster General, Geoffrey Robinson. Perhaps if he had done, Mr Mandelson would have realised the implications of his embarrassing "loan" earlier, with less pain all round.

We must hope that the Prime Minister has learnt his lesson: he must act quickly whenever a colleague is left twisting in the wind. crippled by allegation after allegation. John Major paid a high price for failing to do so, and Mr Blair must avoid the same fate.

As for Mr Mandelson, at least the speed of his departure does him some credit. He knows how important it is that the public have confidence in their elected representatives. They must be "whiter than white". in the Prime Minister's own words, to ensure that politics and politicians do not fall even further in public esteem.

In the absence of further allegations, it seems that Mr Mandelson's offence was relatively benign: not to register the money he received from Mr Robinson, and not to tell his Permanent Secretary that the debt prevented him from overseeing investigations into his benefactor. The former Trade Secretary made a frank confession of those mistakes in his resignation letter yesterday.

There is as yet no question that any influence was in fact bought, or any specific decision perverted, by the relationship. All the same, it was unhealthy and improper for a prospective minister to allow himself to become indebted to a colleague, and a rich and powerful businessman. The public, tired of "sleaze", demand nothing less than the highest standards. Politicians must be open, whether or not they think they have done anything technically wrong. The transparency rules that Tory scandals prompted are beginning to enforce this, and are having the desired effect of forcing more disclosure. The days when politicians could disregard public opinion, or rely on journalists to cover up for them, are long gone.

Mr Blair must now hope that the Christmas holidays will act as a fire-break against this scandal. Perhaps the holiday spirit will calm feelings and encourage forgiveness. But this would be a pity if it were to weaken the impact of the last lesson that New Labour must learn: that cosying up to the rich and powerful has its dangers, as well not the triumph of human hope and creativity, and it is testing was followed by tentative diplomatic contact. For as its opportunities.



# Peace on earth has made real advances

THE COMING of Christmas Eve invites us to embrace peace on earth, and goodwill to men - except that at the moment there seems to be very little of either. Glee has met Peter Mandelson's humiliation in some quarters. Bombs have been falling in the Gulf. Political rivalries have boiled over into divisive hatred in Washington's impeachment debate. In China, a promised political thaw has frozen over again. Russia is still mired in chaotic economic decline and its very own crony version of democracy.

Even so, we should not despair. There is much to celebrate, and many achievements to praise. The birth of Christ, and the worship it inspires, represent nothing if

should celebrate that creativity and hope all around us. Peace on earth has made advances. Northern Ireland's parties defied pessimists last week by reaching agreement on the composition of the Province's new government. The

first guns to be handed in during the present troubles have emerged from the Loyalist Volunteer Force. The fall of Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel holds out the hope of progress in the Middle East. Most of the year has been spent in a depressing morass of broken promises;

at least it is ending with the possibility that a real leader, courageous rather than just shallow and televisual, will emerge to compromise with Israel's Arab neighbours. Some crises did not materialise. Kosovo's civil war has simmered, but not exploded. Nato action, though not going as far as it should have done, was prompt and strong

enough to deter the Serb aggression so conspicuous and unopposed in Bosnia. Pakistan's and India's nuclear appropriate that on the eve of celebrating His birth, we these not-so-small mercies, we should be grateful.

Christian faith and common humanity hold that all men and women are of equal worth. Poverty prevents the realisation of this ideal; it has made unwelcome advances this year in Asia, in the financial crisis still reverberating around that region. But the Asian flu has not carried across all economies. The world financial system has not collapsed, and the rich world will at least get chances in the near future to relieve poverty, rather than sink into depression.

If all people are equal, as Jesus preached, then they should also be equally responsible for their actions. The world has made progress towards this end, too, establishing a global criminal court. General Pinochet's detention is another advance. Even if he now escapes back to Chile, he will at least have been made aware of the pain caused

The world is not perfect. Hope and inspiration do not shine into every dark corner. But they are there, and they are growing. If the message of Christmas means anything. it is this; never despair.

# The most illustrious political suicide since Parkinson – but why?

PETER MANDELSONS is the most profession. We are, as a breed, genillustrious political suicide since the resignation of Cecil Parkinson back in the early Thatcher era. And the most significant. The demise of David Mellor in John Major's day was bad news for the Tory back-to-basics campaign, but Mellor himself was merely an effective (if gobby) minister doing a pretty good job over at Heritage. He was not the embodiment of the new Conservative political idea, nor was he the close confidente of the Prime Min-

anna jeer

ister. But Tony without Peter is more Bill without Hillary. Geoffrey Rooinson's departure yesterday will be infinitely easier to cope with.

Yet it is still not clear to me what Mandelson has done that renders him unfit to serve in government. Indeed, had he resigned only a day later he would (among other things) have given me just enough time to advise readers that I thought he shouldn't and wouldn't. That article would have hung round my neck as permanent testimony to my fallibility, and I have only just been spared from writing it.

But my bemusement, to some extent, remains. As a proposition, I believe that the two circumstances under which ministers should disbowel themselves are a) if they do something badly wrong, and b) - un-fashionable this one - if they're bad at their jobs. Taking the latter one first, the consensus seems to be that Peter Mandelson was set to be a good (possibly very good) Trade Secretary; business actively approved of him and the trade unions respected him.

This is not a proposition that finds much support among the journalistic erally in favour of resignations. Nothing adrenalises a newsroom like a news flash announcing the unexpected departure of someone powerful: profiles are ordered up, cartoons are commissioned, the "events leading up to ... " are chronicled with dates and times. And, of course, the heroic role played by "The Daily X" and "The Sunday Y' in uncovering what previously was hidden, is recalled in

positively Homeric language.
And one resignation whets the appetite for another. There is, therefore, very good reason why a government should attempt to apply the Aaronovitch rules to calls for ministerial selfslaughter. Why, indeed, Geoffrey Robinson has been allowed to hold on until now, despite the periodic and frequent appearance of stories alleging minor past misdemeanours. Blair has, since becoming Prime Minister, been determined not to give the press what they want, not to drop body parts

into the piranha tank. So why, then, has Mandelson gone now and so suddenly? Jack Cunningham, the Government's sleek enforcer, was yesterday at pains to stress that his ex-colleague had committed no sin, save error. How can the oh-so-tough Blair administration allow one of its two or three most valuable ministers to be pushed out of office merely for exhibiting "poor judgement"?

One explanation may, of course, be that there is - in there somewhere a dark little secret waiting to come out. whose disclosure is pre-empted by the resignation. But I doubt it. I do not



# DAVID AARONOVITCH

It is still not clear to me what Mandelson has done that renders him unfit to serve in government

think that Peter Mandelson is in any way corrupt, though I admit that I've known the man for 22 years, and therefore would probably be the last

This being the case. Mr Mandelson's resignation acquires a slightly noble aspect. He could maybe have toughed it out a bit longer, but his judgement was that such obstinacy would have done his PM and "the project" a vast amount of damage. In front of his eyes must have swum the terrifying image of Mellor Reduced, a private affair that was to become a soup of football shirts, sucked toes and family snapshots, and culminated in the eventual pretext of the undeclared holiday taken at the villa of Ms Mona Bauwens.

We all have a Mona Bauwens somewhere, if we are investigated with suf-

the United States, with its unashamed big business bankrolling of senators and congressmen, still rejected a series of presidential nominees for high office because they had failed properly to declare their nannies' incomes to the tax authorities.

So we're down to the fact that, as Mandelson knew, the house business just looked bad. The scale of the loan was too large for it to be dismissed as a simple - and repayable - act of kindness (though the argument that it would suffice to buy 20 houses in Hartlepool is not convincing. Frankly, most things will). People would be likely to ask what the lender wanted out of such a large advance.

It may have been for this very reason that Peter did not tell Tony about the arrangement. He knew that it was not a corrupt deal, and that he had shown Mr Robinson no favours when counselling the PM about what to do with the Paymaster General. But he also must have realised, if he thought about it for five seconds, that this is not what others would believe. Yesterday's letter of resignation contains this passage: "We came to power promising to uphold the highest possible standards in public life. We have not just to do so but we must be seen to do so." That is not, presumably, a conclusion that Mr Mandelson first reached in the long watches of

Tuesday night. In fact, he now acknowledges not only that he should have told the PM and his own Permanent Secretary of his arrangements, but that the original loan was itself a mistake. This ad-

ficient rigour. The political system in mission, and his prompt resignation, should separate him from the desperate. last-ditch denials of the last Conservative government. Peter Lilley's denunciation of Mandelson's "hanging on to office" was, for those with memories, one of the two comic highlights of the day. (The other was the greeting of the news in Mr Mandelson's constituency with the words.

"this is a dark day for Hartlepool".)

That, however, is not the end of the story. There is a very big lesson here for New Labour, and it is one that they should learn from their friends before their enemies teach it to them in a much more unpalatable way. It is one thing to lose the ancient contempt and hatred felt by the left for wealth creators and the rich. It is quite another to adopt an unthinking admiration for the ways of the wealthy. Tax avoidance. though legal, is not admirable. The rich may be genuinely charitable, but they also use their wealth to purchase influence, much as I use working for The Independent as a convenient threat against tardy officials and inefficient companies. The endowed hardly know themselves that this is what they are about.

In other words, you can be wrong without doing wrong. That sense, not fear of the press, should inform the actions of ministers. Like Cecil Parkinson, Peter Mandelson will be back, for he has done the honourable thing. But the health of the Government (a government that this country still wants to see succeed) depends on maintaining a higher degree of humility than some of its members have shown. They surely know this now.

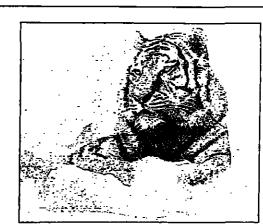
# QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I do not believe that I have done anything improper. But I should not have entered into the arrangement." Peter Mandelson MP

# THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting peace." Amelia Earhart, aviation pioneer

# THIS WEEK IN THEINDEPENDENT **ON SUNDAY**



Blue Tigers: a short story by Jorge Luis Borges. **Published in Britain for** the first time

Labour: it can only get worse, by Siôn Simon



Love life, money, work: your year ahead with the stars

prominent dissident Xu Wenli jailing of two dissidents Peking has failed to fulfil the CHINA HAS tried hard to build promise. The new open and en-

lightened image she has just built up will be affected. In the long term, this is a high cost. the dissidents are in jail and Ming Pao. China

open attitude towards dissi-

their authority being challenged. In balancing the conservative force inside the Communist Party, Jiang Zemin has to be careful in order to avoid chaos. We believe the mainland will be able to catch up with Taiwan's democratic development and enhance prospects for unification if Peking can have a more open attitude towards the dissidents. Sing Tao, China

send them to jail in the case of

dents, they would choose to CHINA WILL, as always, improve human rights and conduct co-operation with other countries to push forward the healthy development of universal human rights. Those who say that China's reform and opening-up policy will be "reversed" and accuse China of "retrogression in political reform", based on their view of

THE TRIALS can only strengthen those who view the mainland warily, and underline the importance of maintaining the Hong Kong system with its freedoms that have so clearly been put off-limits on the mainland. Internationally, the sentences have embarrassed those Western leaders who have been keenest on expandand deepening relations with China. The extremely

narrow view of national secur-

ity reflected in these sentences

will not serve anybody's interests, including those of the central government. South China Morning Post

THE SEVERE punishment of

will incur a cost. The trial has aroused international attention because we not only care about the fate of the dissidents, we also care whether Peking can fulfil the promise of the UN human rights treaties. Now

# **MONITOR**

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD The Chinese press considers the recent

> a more open-minded image, shown in its signing of a human rights treaty. Though main-land leaders today hold a more

human rights situation.

the case of Xu Wenli and a few others, are ignorant of China's China Daily

# RIGHT OF REPLY

**CHRIS TIBBITS** 



The managing director of Virgin Trains replies to our criticisms of their service.

YOUR PIECE, "Virgin's 148 days of no rail service" I feel gives a misleading review of void days.

A void day is when operators feel they are not providing an effective service to their passengers, and means that season ticket holders will automatically be given one day's extension to their season ticket.

An example of this includes 27 October this year when severe infrastructure problems at Rugby and Camden, combined with the failure of another operator's service and severe weather conditions in the North-west resulted in very few Virgin trains being on time.

It should be noted that all these events are beyond our control. However, we at Virgin Trains take responsibility for our passengers and provide compensation and most of the cost of extending season

Until the introduction of our new Passengers Charter on 6 December the only mechanism open to Virgin Trains for making recompense to season ticket holders for poor service was to declare a void day.

To look after its customers, Virgin Trains has given a liberal interpretation of the application of this method which is agreed with the Office of the Rail Franchise Operator (Opraf) and operated previously under British Rail.

Recompense to other customers is made when individual applications are submitted as a result of disrupted service.

The headline in The Independent was particularly misleading. The total is not as illustrated, where they add the results of two separate franchises together, and count the same delay several times.

This situation arises as figures are published separately for void days on each of the three West Coast mainline routes. We do know that our performance could be better.

We are working with Railtrack to ensure a better service both in the near future and after our major investment in new track signalling and trains.

# What's the point if you do this to Muslims?

LAST SUNDAY, at noon, a Home Office official phoned asking if I could attend a meeting with ministers to talk about the bombings on Iraq and British race relations. A handful of Muslims had been invited. Having watched House of Cards, I assumed that this was one of those invitations that required total discretion, and that I must have become a somebody. At 4pm, a journalist called to ask whether I would be going. Another called minutes later (he wanted to know whether Jack Straw thought I was a member of some terrorist organisation). And then someone from The Independent called, by which time I felt that there was no sense in playing secrets any more. I explained that I would not attend the meeting because I was too upset to talk, and that my strong feelings of despair and rage would not help race relations in the meeting-room, let alone the country.

It was not a gesture, not a boycott. I believe Straw is committed to racial equality and I know Mike



# **ALIBHAI-BROWN**

How will 13 million European Muslims cope with the ruthless policies of Western governments?

O'Brien does criticise the popular press and "star" columnists such as Richard Littlejohn who regularly and with pleasure demonise all Muslims, especially when the West is bombing their brethren abroad. But I was not in the mood to comfort the hosts of the recent fireworks party, about which I was not asked. when, (regrettably, I am sure) some of our houses had to be burnt down. These are probably the sentiments of all Muslims living in the West today. Even a Muslim like me -Westernised. defective, full of sin, a vocal critic of much that is wrong in our communities and Islamic countries - cannot and will not support the recent actions against the poor,

wretched people of Iraq.
As Robert Fisk wrote in this paper, the attacks represented "the final bankruptcy of Western policy" towards that once thriving country. One of the birthplaces of human civilisation. Iraq is now a place where researchers find that the children have lost their expectations

of growing up.

I am affronted by the rhetoric of the Government, and told Derek Fatchett this on the PM programme on Radio 4. He fed me more selfserving platitudes in response. There was no meeting of words.

But this is not only about Iraq. It is about how we, the 13 million

European Muslims, are going to cope with the xenophobic, ruthless and thoughtless policies and actions of Western governments when they are dealing with Muslim countries. They do this without any consultation with us and without any understanding of how their own people (for that, whether they like it or not, is what we are) are likely to react.

Let us imagine the unimaginable for a moment. Suppose that the Israeli government got so outlandish, even by the generous standards which apply to it, that military action by the Western allies became necessary. Would this step be taken without long conversations into the night with prominent Jews? We know that the Irish presence in the United States has exerted enormous influence, for worse once and better now on American politicians and the US government itself.

There is much talk in our country about the benefits of diversity. But as the late Barry Troyna, the leading academic of multi-culturalism, wrote, diversity is not only about "saris, samosas and steel bands". Nor is it just about getting fat import orders from India or parading a black mayor through the streets of London. If politicians don't realise that we have a role to play in the foreign policies of this, our nation, they have not understood the changes in this country since 1948. How well can they then be expected to run a mature, complex,

multi-ethnic democracy? New Labour is beginning to stir on this. The Foreign Office has set up a panel of advisers which include people such as Zeinab Badawi and Wahid Ali. But there is still too much ignorance and arrogance in the corridors of power. What a waste of all our Muslim academics who see themselves as Muslims of the West, not of the East.

We British Muslims feel guilty about Iraq, but we also feel powerless. Since Bosnia and Kosovo, when our people (which is increasingly how we regard persecuted Muslims around the world, in spite of our differences) had to die because it was just too difficult to stop these things, our innermost fears are gathered around the spectre of a growing confrontation between Islam and the West.

Imagine then, our task as parents and educators, of persuading the brightest among our young that we must remain part of the democratic process; that there is no sense in being so angry that we make it easier for those who hate us to harm us; that separatist politics will do us no good. Young Muslim chemistry graduates are not building bombs in garages in Neasden or sending out application forms to Bin Laden, but they are increasingly questioning the wisdom of integration.

Another meeting which I did not attend this week was one organised by some Muslim students who want to create a structure which "has nothing to do with the lies about democracy and this anti-Muslim state". This should worry the Prime Minister, and if he wishes to converse I am available, now that I have stopped crying, any time, any place,

# The truths that no Christmas card company would dare touch

"SILENT NIGHT" is one of the most atmospheric of carols. In spite of being synthesised and piped to death around shopping malls, it still has the power to send a tingle up the spine when heard in the candlelit stillness of a midnight service.

Tonight, streams of people will make their way from pub to church, complementing one Christmas spirit with another, for a service that is rapidly becoming more popular than Christmas Day.

Yet, for many, going through the doors of a church is like entering another world. The carols and the readings take you back in time. But they tell a story that has timeless themes. Mary, an unmarried pregnant teenager, faces a bleak future. Joseph rescues her by means of a hasty marriage. The baby is born in difficult circumstances, which are made worse by the murdering of hundreds of local children. The famseek asylum elsewhere. The fact that this child turns out to be the Son of God does not immunise him or them from the dangers of life.

A pregnant teenager, abused children, a family of asylum-seekers these are the characters of the ancient carols. But I doubt that they would ever get through the marketing department of a Christmas card company. Not even charities that espouse these causes would dare risk their lucrative sales by using such cruel images. But that's the story of Christmas. To celebrate the birth of Jesus with merry cards is as wide of the mark as remembering the massacre of Dunblane with a celebrity party captured in a photoshoot by a glossy magazine.

It's the cruelty that makes the story so real and modern. Cynics have always cast doubt on the historical reliability of the Nativity stories. But the fantasy belongs to the commercial hype, not to the original story. Even the episode of angels visiting the shepherds has a ring of truth about it. In the first century asylum seeker? In Even the dis-



# THE BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL

A pregnant teenager and a family of asylum-seekers are the characters of the carols

shepherds were notorious for fiddling the books – selling a few of their boss's sheep and blaming the wolves of the night. So bad was their reputily is forced to flee the country and ation that they weren't allowed to give evidence in a court of law. Why would Luke, so keen to get his gospel accepted by sceptics, make up such a line if it didn't have its root in fact? In today's world it would be like angels making the announcement to a convention of used-car salesmen. Shepherds had the same problem. In fact, God sending his messengers to such a bunch of outsiders and social outcasts was exactly the message he wanted to get over to the world. There's nobody beyond the pale. Shepherds, usedcar salesmen, pregnant teenagers, the abused and the abuser, asylum seekers, all lie within the circumference of his love.

This is disconcerting for us who prefer to put people into boxes. We like to give everybody a category. Then you're either in or out. Social exclusion is not a new phenomenon. All the signs of the first Christmas are that God commits himself to a grand plan of social inclusion.

A pregnant teenager? In. A distrusted shepherd? In. An anxious

tinguished strangers from the East come bringing a message of inclusiveness along with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They are the first to worship Jesus. Foreigners and Orientals are in the vanguard to acknowledge the worth of this Jewish child. It is significant that this episode is recorded exclusively by Matthew. He is at pains to point out at every turn that Jesus is the fulfilment of all the Jewish prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. Matthew wanted to convince his own that Jesus was the Messiah and seems to shoot himself in the foot by relating that the primary witnesses to his birth were not kosher Jews but Orientals.

Again, it's difficult to know why this was put in if it did not happen, for it added nothing to Matthew's case. Yet even though it may have been difficult for his readers to accept, this episode of the Nativity shows the God of Abraham and Moses using people beyond traditional and territorial boundaries. He is, after all, a God without frontiers Dieu sans frontières.

As Jesus grew up and embarked on his public ministry he was forever undermining and subverting the categories that made people feel safe. His practice of including those who were excluded made him look like a walking, personified Social Inclusion Unit. You name it and he included it. A leper, whose rotting flesh

barred him from the community, he touched with the silky grace of Diana. A prostitute, whose sexuality was seized by money not love, he allowed to touch his own body. A Samaritan, who to his audience had all the kudos of an American in Iraq, he saluted for his compassion. An tax inspector, filthy rich from exacting and extracting money from his own people to fill the coffers of a despised and occupying dictatorship, he befriended. Is it any wonder that they could not cope with this



A detail from the Adoration of the Magi (1598) by Jan Brueghel the Elder

venturer? The only way they could handle him was to manhandle him on to a cross. In all their dealings with him and through all their questioning of him as to who was in or out of God's Kingdom, included or excluded, they could not nail him down, so they nailed his body to wood to silence the questions with which he answered theirs.

It disturbed them that forgiveness was the word that was often on his lips. It was always in his heart. He could call a spade a spade and

hypocrites. He could preach hell-fire tims of exclusion through what we with all the vim of Ian Paisley. But he could never hide that gut-wrenching compassion that always embraced the outsider. There was nobody beyond the pale of God's love. The least, the last and the lost these were his priority

To save them was his mission. That's why he was born into this world. That's what his name, "Jesus", means: "God saves". He rescues the outsider, the outcast, the excluded. He also exposes the truth subversive and unpredictable mercy Herod a fox and religious leaders that we're all both agents and vic-

us know you're all

DO YOU believe in

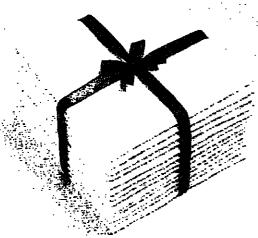
right.

say and do to one another. We all need rescuing. That's why the Christmas story of God's grand plan of inclusion acted out in Jesus Christ is good news; not just for a pregnant teenager and an asylum-seeking family, but for all the world on this silent and holy night.

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Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light; Radiant beams thy holy face With the down of saving grace.
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.

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# ALL APPEARS not to be well in the joint restaurant empire of Marco

Pierre White and the Granada group, since they launched a joint venture last year. Suspicions were raised when people wishing to book for the Grill Room at the Café Royal found staff hesitant to take bookings, or were referred to another of White's restaurants, the Oak Room. Moreover, a rumour has been circulating that a number of Grill Room staff were dismissed earlier this week. A call to the publicity department of Forte Hotels, the relevant arm of Granada, solicited a prepared statement: "Both joint-venture parties are currently reviewing the positioning of the Grill Room and considering various opportunities for the restaurant in future." Unfortunately, Pandora's attempts to contact Marco to discuss the future of the Grill Room met with no response.

THE NEWS of Peter Mandelson's resignation was too much for the designer Nicky Haslam. Haslam has spoken to Pandora before about his liking for Mandy (see 28 August) and was understandably upset when Pandora broke the news to him. Good God, I didn't know that.

# **PANDORA**

I'm stunned," spluttered Haslam. dealing with him as much as Pandora has, survive? Oofy, Oofy, "I'm so stunned I don't really know what to say." With that, Nicky made his excuses and rang off. Perhaps Haslam could cheer Mandy Santa? Well, if you up by doing a spot of it is important that interior reyou do. How designing important this is was demonstrated a few Notting weeks ago when a photographer colleague abode? of Pandora's called the Harrods press office to ask for some shots of ONE BURNING question their own Santa, "As that arises from long as you realise it is the real Father Mandy's resignation is what will happen to his Christmas," the Harrods faithful servant PR woman warned. Benjamin Wegg-Despite the photographer informing Prosser. Oofy, as he is endearingly known, her that he no longer would surely not believed in Santa, she relish being persisted with the fantasy lumbered with a act. When the low-key role, any photographer asked if it more than his boss would be all right to snap their Santa having a cup of would. So how will the tea, the PR replied: "Oh no. doyen of so many he has a magic dust in his newspaper pockets, so he doesn't need to have a tea break." Ho, Ho, Ho. columnists, who have no doubt enjoyed

THE IMPEACHMENT of President Clinton has proved a real boon to give Pandora a call; let bars on both sides of the Atlantic Tuffy Vetter, a bar manager of the Daily Grill in Washington, has named a new cocktail after the crisis, "Impeachmenthe" - half peach schnapps and half white crème de menthe. But Tuffy is not work for Harrods then alone. Janet Evans, owner of Janet's Bar in South Kensington, has produced her own version, the "Impeach" – peach schnapps, orange juice and cream. "It's washed down with a Monica Lewinsky chaser," Evans told

> PANDORA HEARS that the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, has recently been the victim of a misunderstanding. Dining at a restaurant outside Cardiff a few weeks ago, Prescott asked the waitress for some "asparagus tips". Unfortunately, the waitress in question was just moving away from the table when Prescott made his request. and therefore didn't quite understand what the Deputy Prime Minister was saying. When she returned to the table. she informed him: "I'm sorry, we've only got Benson & Hedges."



WITH VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

# I want to avoid a family Christmas

Geraldine is dreading Christmas because her stepfather bullies her mother - although her mother doesn't appear to mind - and he organises Christmas differently from the way it was done when her father was alive. Her brother's children also make her feel poignantly aware of her single, childless status. Could she be 'ill', and avoid the occasion?

I DON'T think I've met anyone this year who isn't dreading Christmas. Is it the ghastly build-up and the knowledge that however nice our Christmases are. they're unlikely to live up to the standard presented by the media? Is it the fact that as you get older someone is nearly always missing from the Christmas scene - a divorced father, a dead parent? Is it the poignant memory of wonderful

Christmases past that can never be re-

childhood Christmases?

have gloomy Christmas lunches at a long, greasy, school trestle table in the dismal school dining-room, with nothing to drink but a jug of water. Afterwards I would be given an improving book about architecture, unwrapped.

Now, I would give anything to go into a hole and hide during what's laughingly known as the "festive season". So why don't I? I could at least, like captured? Is it the memory of stressful

several friends, take a holiday to India and avoid it all. And why do I think that Because my great-aunt was also my Geraldine, if she possibly can, should

## VIRGINIA'S ADVICE

headmistress, my parents and I used to cover herself with protective emotional spray and spend at least Christmas lunch, if nothing else, with her family?

Christmas, even though the majority of us forget it or couldn't give a pin, is basically a religious festival. When we're in deep trouble, most of us, even nonbelievers, find ourselves automatically sending up a prayer to someone. Keeping this someone in mind for a couple of hours once a year is surely, if nothing else, insurance. Then, there is the family. We all bemoan the death of the family, but by copping out we're adding to

the rot. Blood is thicker than water and however much we loathe our relations, most of them will rally round us in time of trouble, just out of duty if nothing else. 's worth touching base once a year.

Christmas is a time when you have to give presents - yes, even to people you can't stand, and even to people who have everything. But giving and receiving from people you dislike is good for the soul, even if you're cursing underneath. So this year Geraldine should go, re-

membering that Christmases past can never be recreated, and that if her

mother doesn't mind the way her husband treats her, then it's none of Geraldine's business to get angry about it. Who knows, her mum may have a masochistic streak and secretly get turned on by being ordered about. And if Geraldine feels lonely and barren when faced with her nephews and nieces, she should remember that their little lives are enriched by the presence of a kindly aunt. Maybe they'll barely talk to her, but she should be there partly for their sake, to add to their feeling of security that they have a big loving family around them.

But there is a way out, and although it's too late for Geraldine to employ it now, she should plan it for next year. She should hold Christmas for the family at her house. She should also invite a polite friend as a "bulking agent". I have often been used at family Christmases as a kind of Fybogel, simply because a stranger's presence makes everyone behave themselves. The stepfather will not dream of bullying the mother, Geraldine can have Christmas "her" way, and rather than feel like a sad little spinster, she will feel like a powerful hostess.

## READERS' SUGGESTIONS

Make a deal with your mother I really sympathise with Geraldine. As a manager in a London department store, the last thing I want to do is drive 150 miles to spend less than 48 hours with my mother and sisters and their children who are naturally quite a handful.

Unfortunately my parents separated a few years ago, which made the decision to spend Christmas in London much more difficult. Geraldine should make a deal with her mother. What I do now is spend a weekend at the beginning of December with my mother doing Christmas shopping and spending time together. We both enjoy it and look forward to seeing each other at this time. JEREMY EATON London SE10

Sacrifice yourself and go I too am a 35-year-old singleton with a stressful job, but Christmas can make me behave like a 15-year-old. I rarely or never row with family - except at Christmas. My parents are finding their own right that she is having Christmas with

way of living together now that the children have left home and I respect their right to do so; but at the moment it seems to consist of the two of them constantly bickering in a way that makes spending time with them stressful.

This makes me think every year about not going home for "the day itself" but, it seems, only having a family of your own gives you the cast-iron right to spend Christmas by yourself. In the end I will be going, and I think I would advise Geraldine to go too.

For me, buying loads of presents that give people pleasure, having a few drinks, helping with the cooking and a dose of teeth-gritting are worth it for my mother to be able to say to her friends that she is "having the whole family over at Christmas". ANONYMOUS

Spend the day with your friends It would be wrong for Geraldine to feign illness; she should tell her mother outshe hates her family Christmas, just that she owes it to her friends. Yes, her mother will be upset - mine

was when I dropped the "family" Christmas 23 years ago, but she soon got over ADAM WATSON it and I now have the Christmas I London WC1

friends this year. She doesn't have to say choose (with my partner) without the Compromise is best tyranny of fractious nephews and nieces, grumpy aunts and uncles, or enforced eating and drinking. Go for it, Geraldine break loose: you will not regret it!

## **NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA**

Dear Virginia, I am a single man of 30. I have the occasional girlfriend and once I was in love and wanted to get married, but it didn't work out, I have a good friend, a single woman of my own age, and we spend a lot of time together. Recently, however, she's hinted that she wants the relationship to be sexual. She insists it is just sex she is after, nothing more. I find her quite attractive, and in some ways this would suit me, but I don't love

her, and I worry that sex might

destroy our friendship. She says we're old enough not to let that happen.What do you think? Yours sincerely, Max

Anuone who has advice quoted will be sent a bouquet from Interflora Please send letters and dilemmas to Virginia Ironside, The Independent', 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf. London E14 5DL; fax 0171-293 2182; e-mail dilemmas @independent.co.uk - giving a postal address for the bouquet

Be honest, resolute and prepared to compromise. Tell your mother that you wish to spend Christmas in your own home this year, but will visit them either immediately before or after. You could send flowers - and telephone on Christmas morning.

Doing this confirms you are part of the family (warts and all!), but are also breaking free of a gathering that causes you stress. AUDREY ROTHERHAM

Surbiton, Surrey

Grit your teeth and endure Geraldine should realise that there are thousands, maybe millions of us, who do not want to spend Christmas with "the family." Her family has its ways of making her feel bad; everyone else's families have theirs. She must grit her teeth, tell herself it's only one day, and look forward to Boxing Day and New Year. For obvious reasons, Anonymous



# POXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS JUMBO CROSSWORDS

# **CRYPTIC CLUES**

Across 13 Monstrous creature with unexpected urban roots (10) No turning back? But good man turns, after consideration

(2.6.8)Group of soldiers involved in munitions

Another newspaper carries important information of moment? (4-7) Yarn about ill bred dramatist (10)

One may get fee after penning article curtailed from lack of interest (6) Cs and Ms formed by cake decorations?

ã.3.9) US musical creating stir in US state (8) Exhumed dead isn't accepting one made a mistake (11) Old doctor giving shelter to children

Studies crime as crime? (10) Contrivances of French crimes (7)

World is blurry, un-known, through halfclosed eyes? (8) Suspend activities of professional crook

Lawsuit involving scoundrel falls (7) Charge on bond about to come down

Hand over film for developing in Welsh The manufacture of clothing could be addictive (5-7) Place ship around

front of smart turn Wobbly sea-legs, al-ways the same (7) United leading the way amongst division's newly-promoted teams? (8)

Long jail sentence a blow? Here's sup-port for those floun-Unionist, leading one, having a new ideal (7)

Marijuana in powdery heap - mind! Chap going round capital of Hungary (a European city) (5) Prepares songs for court activities? Front of battalion

notice lights in wasteground (8) Gamekeeper's story unsuitable for maids? (4,11,5) Insect: sugar-crop left reduced by 50%

Party are all upset about Arab countries with certain financial Indicate woman and man to be whipped

Greatest feeling of offence, we hear (4) Psephologists re-sponsible for choos-60 ing the President? Unearths an unusual

Down \$1000 - and keep it quiet - gets you facilities for key players

opera (10)

Speed heading for Kendal's rising 100 mph (4) US writer to attempt a particular genre Indian burial ground unlikely to be at-

tacked by cowboys? Now it's Christmas? (7-3)Western heroines dress up in hoods (3-

Footwear adds something decora-tive to a girl (3-5) It's responsibility, working with our people (4) Looked around church, though not informally (8) Irish play - but it's the English, with an inch to spare!

(4,5,5,6) Encourage those at-tacking the under-growth with choppers (3-7) Retained a hint of temperance (though very flushed exter-nally) (6)

Observe the loud sound of the birds from Norway? (12) Fastening for bags? Arranged closure during journey (7-4) Artists, as it were, in

a desperate state (4.7)Negro spiritual presented as jazz with a touch of blues - very pleasant - No. 10 in hit parade (5,3,5,7) See Henry escape in the dusk (4-5) Change the last word (editor's No.2 intended to ditch article) (9)

Bandit the subject of a hunt - business involving heads of Special Police (9) A case near to labour? This may en-

sue (9) Surprise name given to institute after receiving millions (9) Hanging on to make circuit around Eastern ocean (9) Pass round a sink that's a fuel container (4,7)

Respond to 'A penny for your thoughts'?

Unbridled cavalry I deem reckless (5-3-4) All over the gazetteer? (10) Discourtesy in busi-

ness centre involving one largely despica-Historical period revealing wizards grasping conundrum? Vigorous American twice imprisoned for twenty-four hours (8)

Religious academic has raised a central point about founder of religion (6) Skilful, pert... (4) ...and almost rich (4) Married existence allowed to be sent up in

By Phi CONCISE CLUES

13 Fool (10) Inexperienced (3,6,3,4) Only fair? (4) Friendship (11) Cave-dweller (10) 19 Short piano pieces

21 Poem by Keats (2,5,4,4,5)23 In a chilly manner 25 Initial use of weapon-

ry (5,6) Woodwind instruments (5) In the manner of a march (mus.) (4,6) Strong-smelling (7) With resentment (8) Fair-skinned fellow

Mosque feature (7) Stomach-turning (10) Biology, etc. (4,8) Essex woods (6,6) Campanologist (4-6) In general (7) Member of a small

ruling class (8) Puns, etc. (8) Sonnet or symphony, say (3,4) Corridor (10) Follow (5) Cursory remarks

53 Large breed of dog Almost is not good enough (1,4,2,2,4,2,1,4)

Prison (4-2) Superfluous item Town in Dorset (11) Weak (4) Proof of age (5,11)

Superman's city (10)

Showing the effects of two sets of traditions (10) Aberdonian, say (4) Frowned-upon pun-ishment for children Usual state (U.S) (8) Light musical drama (5,5) Someone with idle

thumbs? (8) Pertinent (8) Present (4) Lawyer (8) Novel by James Fenimore Cooper (3,4,2,3,8)

11 Interfering (10) Reviewer (6) 300th anniversary Unpleasant (11) 22 Dealing with life (11) 24 It won't stand up in court (12,8)

Irritable (9) With slyness (9) Whit (9) 31 What's produced by medium (9) Middle-class (9) E.g. the Christmas rose (9)

35 Telepathy (4-7) 37 Healing (11) 40 No. 2 (6,6) Coverings during decorating (4-6) Very softly (10) Literary assistant

Building containing fruit-trees (8) Self-centred (8)

Location of a French cathedral (8) Sufficient (8) Tightwad (6) Remained in hiding

Understand (4) Game requiring a table (4)

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Delivers works of a

reflective nature (8) Singer? Mean to

bring in one with grand style (8) Handsome young man with a head of

hair, attracting love

# THE THURSDAY REVIEW The Independent 24 December 1998

# William Gaddis

most important of the new American novelists to appear after the Second World War. He was also among the most undervalued perhaps not surprisingly, for his work, encyclopaedic, anagrammatic, intricately carpentered and constructed, was never to every taste.

Perhaps it was unfortunate that his first novel, The Recognitions (1955), a 956-page tour de force on fraudulence, counterfeiting, and the deceptions of art and religion, with a cast of some 50 characters, appeared in the 1950s. It was not a time given to literary experiment, and the book was subjected to much hostile reviewing - "a sobering experience", reflected Gaddis.

But it did find its own band of readers, was passed from hand to hand among students, deeply admired by fellow authors (Bellow, Doctorow), celebrated by Tony Tanner in his masterly 1971 study of modern American fiction, City of Words. Finally it came to be seen as perhaps the first "postmodern" novel, a forerunner of the fiction of Thomas Pynchon and John Barth.

Possibly because of the poor press response to his first novel, Gaddis took 20 more years to produce his second, J.R. (1975), a satirical comedy about an 11-year-old high-school boy who learns the rules of speculation and becomes a successful capitalist, exploiting the games that money lets us play.

Again, the book is massive, centred around a notion of extreme conspiracy, and deeply concerned with linguistic and lexical codes. The novel's first word is "Money" - "spoken in a voice that rustled" - and money is the interconnective tissue of this vast, sprawling, manipulating world. Language itself is manipulated, and the book belongs to that body of lexical fiction where the nature of language, codes and discourse is always under test. Modern information theory, cybernetics, is used to code and structure the novel - a game of "noise" and silence. This time the novel was well received, earning its author the

National Book Award. Ten years later Gaddis produced Carpenter's Gothic (1985) - a book whose title said much about the nature of his work. "Carpenter's Gothic" is an American style of domestic architecture where grand European designs are adapted and re- the age of Pynchon, Barth and ended his university career, and he clever ironies, there was always a po- December 1998.

WILLIAM GADDIS was among the carpentered for more humble circumstances, producing "a patchwork of conceits, borrowings, deceptions". It was a fair description of his own flavour, for the novel exploits many of the generic aspects of Gothic and sensational fiction without ceasing to have an air of parody. Gaddis's parody was intensely serious, however, his theme being the corruption - political, artistic, financial, and linguistic - of the modern American world in its age of hyper-reality. At this time, Penguin reissued all his books in paperback.

Since then Gaddis produced one further book, A Frolic of His Own (1994), As J.R. begins with the word 'Money", this begins with the word "Justice?", and is an elaborate comedy of the role of the law and legislation in American society. This book has an increased topicality now

The title of the

novel said much about the nature of his work. 'Carpenter's Gothic' is an American style of architecture adapting grand European designs for more humble circumstances

that the American legal system has succeeded in allowing a small incident in an Arkansas hotel to develop, through a series of ever more absurd accusations and claims for restitution, into the grounds of impeaching a president, "Every profession is a conspiracy against the public," Gaddis writes wrily, "every profession protects itself with a anguage of its own."

Gaddis's themes have been central to modern American fiction in



DeLillo; he has been a major ex- went to work for the New Yorker. He perimental writer who, over time, has greatly influenced many. Yet there was always a sense in which his own work was a frolic of his own, to some degree protected by a language of its own.

William Gaddis had strong literary credentials. Born to an affluent family in New York City, he went to Harvard and, like so many American writers, edited The Harvord Lampoon. But a drunken brawl

then travelled a good deal in Latin America, settled in Greenwich Village (where he knew the "Beats"). then worked in Spain and Paris as a freelance author and speech-writer.

At various times he worked for American international corporations and witnessed American intervention in foreign lands, something that earned his satirical rage. Behind Gaddis's language experiments, his game-plans, his

litical bitterness and a battle against the inauthentic. He was a man of great charm, wit and intelligence. Before he died, William Gaddis had completed another novel, Agape. His was an unusual but a major literary career, and one hopes it will earn him full recognition.

MALCOLM BRADBURY

William Gaddis, writer: born New York 29 December 1922; died East Hampton, New York 16

# Bill Gregson

DURING THE 1960s and 1970s, at the time of the White Heat of the technological revolution, a number of industrialists - who never revealed their personal voting preferences - were of great help to the Wilson opposition, the 1964-70 government, and the 1974-79 government. Such a one was Bill Gregson of Ferranti, champion extraordinary of the importance of computer-controlled machine tools, who later became deputy chairman of the British Airports

Authority (1975-85). Gregson was outstandingly influential with politicians, partly on account of his ability to put incisive questions, and to offer practical ways of addressing complex problems and moving forward. He not only posed questions but repeatedly came up with sensible answers. He was a man of technological vision.

He came of a family of colliery agents, who owned the engineering firm of Smith and Gregson, which was nationalised in 1948. He was always grateful for the education he received, particularly in mathematics and physics, at King William's College on the Isle of Man. After a period at Faraday House Engineering College he joined the RAF in 1941 and, such was his skill in the communications field, he rose to be a squadron leader by the time he

His wartime experience led to the position of technical sales manager of Ferranti in Edinburgh in 1946, and after five years he was promoted to the same job in London which he occupied until 1959. Returning to Scotland as assistant general manager of the huge Pilton plant, he was involved in the many controversies which surrounded Ferranti's contracts at that time.

My first encounters with him were extremely sharp. He was angry that I had suggested to the Public Acone of his most valuable advisers. counts Committee, of which I was a very junior member, that Ferranti ought to be brought before them to examine the Bloodhound project, the missile on which Ferranti's were alleged to have made huge profits and as a result of which Basil de Ferranti was hauled before the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons and required to give some money back to the Treasury.

Gregson thought that raw politicians ought to understand that companies should make healthy profits on one military development project in order to have the wherewithal to finance other projects military and civil. However his personal relations were extremely good and like others with whom he had clashed I became a firm, lifelong friend.

Gregson was extremely active in the British Electrotechnical and Allied Manufacturers Associations (Beama), and its president in 1983s Director-Gener of Beama from 1982 to 1985, describes him as "charming, incisive, determined and deeply committed. I remember especially one contribution he made which reflected his and was chairman of the Machineinfluence and persuasiveness and lasted for several years. 'Gordon,' he said. You need presidents from the very top of our industry."

He then invited the leaders of the engineering industry to dinner at the Café Royal and the level of acceptance was, remembers Gaddes "surprisingly high". The chairmen and chief executives alike agreed with Gregson when challenged to take up his mantle. Later, in succession. Beama presidents were to include Sir William Barlow, chairman of the Post Office and BICC, Viscount Weir of G.J. Weir and Co pump manufacturers, the Hon Geoffrey Wilson, chairman of Delta, Sir Terence Harrison, chairman and chief executive of Rolls Royce, and Sir Robert Davidson of GEC Alsthom - "all". says Gaddes, "as a result of Gregson's dinner".

Outside Ferranti, where he had a



Letting managers manage

good relationship with Sir Donald McCallum, his contemporary and general manager, Gregson was a di rector of British Telecom Scotland (1977-85), of Anderson Strathclyde, the coalmine equipment manufacturers, of Brammer, electronic engineers (1978-86), and of East of Scotland Industrial Investments. He was consultant to ICI and also found time to be the chairman of the Scottish General Practitioners Support Unit (1971-79) and deputy chairman of the Scottish Council for

Development and Industry. I record this sample of his various positions to indicate that he was a man who had a finger in every industrial pie north of the border - and with benevolent effect. Perhaps Vernon Murphy, now the Director of the Scottish Airports Authority and as a young man Director of Aberdeen Airport puts his finger on why Gregson was so effective:

The wonderful contribution which Bill made to the business of Scottish airports was that he played an active role using his wide experience of Scottish business in discussing and advising on issues, without ever straying over the divide of letting managers manage. That is somewhat unusual in people of his elevated position.

"He applied this to all levels of the business, and took a particular interest in the so-called outlying areas, the Highlands and Islands and Aberdeen."

It is indeed a rare quality among businessmen talking to politicians not to be hectoring and Gregson's questions, smile and chuckle were more effective than any amount of hectoring and lecturing. I think it was this sensitivity to other people's difficulties which endeared him to successive Secretaries of State for Scotland, particularly the late Willie Ross, who thought Gregson was

Gregson spent a great deal of time as a board member of Livingston New Town between 1968 and 1976, years when I was constituency Member of Parliament for two-fifths of Livingston. Seeing him at close quarters he was extraordinarily persuasive in securing overseas investment, particularly from the United States.

The late Herb Allen, who was to bring the Cameron Ironworks - to be the biggest forge in Europe - to Livingston at the start of the North Sea oil industry, confided that one of the reasons that he had come to Livingston with his huge and welcome investment was that his grandfather had been a shale miner in West Lothian and the other was the transparent technical competence and realism of the industrial board member Bill Gregson.

On the national level Gregson's contribution was through the tional Economic Office, and particularly its committees on industrial strategies in the late 1970s. He was always conscious of the importance of automation tool Expert Committee, 1969-70. He was also conscious of the im-portance of design and was a mean ber of the Design Council, 1980-85. He had esoteric interests which led him to be a commissioner of the Northern Lighthouse Board for 15 years, 1975-90.

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Bill Gregson was the obverse of the scientist engineer simply interested in his own field. For eight years he was a director of the Scottish National Orchestra, becoming its vicechairman in 1981 and its chairman in a difficult period, 1984-85. Veronica Gibson, widow of Sir Alexander Gibson, the SNO's great conductor, recalls: "Alec found Bill Gregson, a charming man, with a deep know edge of music, and a most support ive and helpful chairman." Anyone invited to a happy home made for Gregson by Rosalind, his wife, who died in 1994, would be amazed at his skill in automating his residence and in the forgotten art of cabinet-

making with his own hands. Raymond Williamson, chairman of the orchestra for the last decade, said: "Bill Gregson played a vital role in encouraging sponsorship without which we would not have had the financial support to develop."

TAM DALYELL

William Derek Hadfield Gregson, electronic engineer: born Stock port, Lancashire 27 January 1920, assistant general manager, Ferranti (Scotland) 1959-83; CBE 1970; Deputy Chairman, British Airports Authority 1975-85; married 1944 Rosalind Reeves (died 1994; three sons, one daughter); died Edinburgh 15 December 1998.

# Hrair Maroukhian

HRAIR MAROUKHIAN headed the leading political party in the Armenian diaspora for nearly a quarter of a century.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), or Dashnak party, is not only a political party, but a way of life for its members, particularly in the diaspora communities of the Middle East, from where Maroukhian came, and in the United States. Besides its political activities, the party runs a series of newspapers, social clubs, youth groups and scouting organisations, and has strong influence over parts of the Armenian Church. By the 1970s, when Maroukhian

was elected chairman of the party's highest body the Bureau - a position to which he was re-elected six times - the party was a rather timid shadow of its former self, rooted in its Middle Eastern setting. Maroukhian transformed it into an aggressive anti-Turkish body waging a world-wide campaign to force Turkey to admit guilt for the massacres of more than one million Armenians in Anatolia and the expulsion of almost the entire Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire in the early years of this century.

Accused by the Turks of being the sponsors of terrorist attacks on Turkish diplomats from the mid-1970s, the Dashnaks always distanced themselves from Armenian terror groups. However, as late as 1993 Maroukhian was denied entry to Canada, as the authorities there suspected the party of links to



the perpetrators of two attacks on Turkish targets in Canada in the early 1980s

The ARF - founded in Tiflis in 1890 - was always an alliance of strong nationalists and revolutionary socialists. Maroukhian was a strong ideologue who defended the party's socialist identity, to the displeasure of some members who felt it should shed its socialist

True to its revolutionary origins, the ARF remained a secretive, conspiratorial party, suspicious of outsiders. It was banned by the Soviet authorities after they took power in Armenia in 1920 from the shortlived Dashnak-led government. The Dashnaks remained fiercely anti-Soviet until the early 1980s, when KGB infiltration and the changing international climate caused a re-

Maroukhian waged a worldwide campaign to force Turkey to admit guilt for the massacres of one million Armenians in Anatolia

think among senior ARF leaders, who were won over to the view that the Soviet Union had at least preserved Armenian identity and a piece of territory the Armenians could call their own

The party revived its activities in Armenia in the late 1980s and-with national independence once again in sight - the ARF leadership officially relocated to Armenia in August 1990. Maroukhian was able to visit the country and engage in its volatile politics. The Dashnaks took a hard line in the conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave whose Armenian majority were fighting for independence from Azerbaijan, and on Turkey.

Levon Ter-Petrosyan, who in 1991 became independent Armenia's first president, was increasingly intolerant of Dashnak criticism of his gov-

opinion became even sharper when Maroukhian alleged that Ter-Petrosvan had acted as a KGB informer when he was a student. In June 1992 Ter-Petrosvan announced in a televised speech that he was expelling Maroukhian from Armenia and banned him from any future visits.

Maroukhian, by now a Greek citizen, was in Armenia awaiting the convention of the 25th ARF World Congress which was to be held in Armenia for the first time since 1919. Maroukhian complied with Ter-Petrosyan's request, stating that the ARF would not incite civil unrest in the homeland. The World Congress had to be postponed and convened later in another venue.

Maroukhian could do little but watch from Athens as relations between the Armenian government and the Dashnak-tinged elements of the diaspora worsened. In December 1994 Ter-Petrosyan banned the ARF from operating in Armenia, alleging that it was engaged in a cam-

paign of terrorism and subversion. Born in 1928 in Iran, Maroukhian was an engineer by training and profession, though politics was his passion. He joined the ARF as a young man and assumed leadership posts in the party, serving as chair-man of the Central Committee in Iran. In 1963 the 18th ARF World Congress elected him to the Bureau. He served on the Bureau continuously, becoming chairman in 1971. He was based initially in Beirut but moved to Athens with his

ernment. Such differences of family during the Lebanese civil war when the party headquarters transferred to Greece.

By the time of his expulsion from Armenia in 1992, Maroukhian's long political career at the helm of the Dashnaks was about to end. In July 1994, while he was swimming in the Mediterranean off Athens, he suffered a massive brain aneurysm. He fell into a coma from which he would never recover. He was cared for at home by his wife and family. kept alive by tubes and fluids. He lost his position as Bureau chairman and was barely mentioned even by the Dashnak press.

This year Ter-Petrosyan's successor as Armenian president, Robert Kocharian, moved to defuse the hostility to the Dashnaks in Armenia itself. In May he lifted the ban on the party and revoked Ter-Petrosyan's ban on Maroukhian's entry into Armenia. But by this time Maroukhian was unaware of his political rehabilitation in what he considered his homeland.

Although he was preparing to move permanently to live in Armenia at the time of his expulsion, Maroukhian never fulfilled his dream. Armenia will however be his resting place.

FELIX CORLEY

Hrair Maroukhian, politician: born Kermanshah, Iran 1928; Chairman, Dashnak Bureau 1971-94 married 1958 Anahit Ter-Sarkissian (two sons, two daughters); died Athens 21 December 1998.

# **Archie Moore**

IT IS one of the boxing game's great adages that the measure of a boxer's spirit is his ability to accept defeat and more importantly to get up after a knockdown, writes Frank Gray. Archie Moore Jobituary by Bob Mee, 11 December) fought many wars - notably against Rocky Marciano, whom he knocked down once but who rose up and

knockout in the ninth round.

Despite the defeat, Moore - who was 41 - proved he was far from finished when, on an arctic night in Montreal on 10 December 1958, he defended his light-heavyweight title against the Commonwealth champion Yvon Durelle, a French-

and were nearly given it in the opening seconds when Durelle felled Moore with a devastating right hand.

Moore struggled to his feet within a microsecond of being counted out, only to be knocked down twice more in that round, both for nine-Canadian from Baie Ste Anne, New counts. The screaming crowd of he had been down four times. The pounded his way through Moore's Brunswick. The partisan crowd at 18,000 - sensing a rare world title for two fought again the following August

pinpoint punching to win by a the Montreal forum, mainly used for a Canadian fighter - saw Moore but Moore made no mistakes and dis-

famed wrap-around defence, in which, when under attack, he literally wrapped his arms around his face and peeked out from between his forearms. "You see, I was a bad little boy," cular Durelle was in retreat and by he liked to tell people, "and my mama had to whup me a lot; this is the way the 11th, when he was knocked out, I learned how to defend myself."

It was ironical, then, that Moore, long retired, was in the heavyweight champion George Foreman's corner when he fought Muhammad Ali in Zaire in 1974. But it was Ali, not Foreman, who employed a peek-a-boo defence, which he used while Foreman punched himself into exhaustion, leaving himself ripe for a knockout

biographer. George Plimpton, the New York writer, editor and bon vivant, when asked if he might take it on, shook his head. He had written about Moore before - his 1959 account of his sparring session with Moore in which he paid the price for landing a lucky punch. You know something," he recalled, "he broke my nose." He looked like it still he. 40 years on,

ice hockey, bayed for Moore's blood knocked from rope to rope for five rounds, but then had to see the op-

patched Durelle in three rounds. One of Moore's "tricks" was his portunity slip away as Moore put on what many regarded as one of boxing's greatest comebacks. By the seventh round, the mus-

> in the eighth round. Moore has always lacked a good

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### CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 25 December Bam HC: 10am Matins, Britten in E: 11am Sung Euchanst, Missa brevis in B flat (Mozart, The Archbishop: 3.15pm Evensong and Carob, Dyson YORK MINSTER: 25 December Bam, 8 45am HC. Ibam Sung Eucharst, Schubert in G. The Arch-blehop: 11 45am Matins, Ireland in F. The Very Rev Raymond Furnell: 4pm Evensong, Aston in F

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass, The Very Ray Peter Berry, 25 December 90m Morning Prayer; 9.15am HC; 11am Choral Eucharist, The Right Rey

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL 24 December 1120pm Midnight Communion, The Proved 23 December Barn HC: 9.15am Choral Mauns; BRADFORD CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm First Communion of Christmas, Aston set-ting, The Provost, 25 December 8am RC: 10.15am RC, The Bishop

HC, The Bishop
BRISTOL CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm
Midnight Eucharist, Messe de minuit (Charpentier). The Dean, 25 December 8.40am Matins:
10am Festal Eucharist, St. Nicholas mass (Haydn).
The Bishop: 3.30pm Evening Prayer
BURY ST EDMUNDS, 84 Edmundsbury CatheDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Sung
Eucharist, Canon Marion Mingins, 25 December
8am HC: 10am Christmas Sung Eucharist, The
Bishop: 3.30pm Choral Evensons
CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 23 December 11.30pm
Midnight Eucharist, 25 December 7.45am Matins.

Midnight Eucharist, 25 December 7.45am Ma Ram Eucharist, 10.30am Sung Eucharist, 4pm CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL: 21 December 11.30 Midnight Mass, Missa ad praesepe (Mal-colm), The Provost, 25 December Barn HC, Canon Andrew Knowles; 9 30am Eticharist, The Bishup: 11am A Service for Christmas Morania, Te Deum

lam A Service for Christmas Morning, Te Deum Rutter), Canon David Knight: 12.10pm HC: 5.15pn CHESTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11 30pm

Midnight Eucharist Canon Trevor Dennis, 25 December 10am Eucharist, The Bishop, 11 30am Eucharist The Dean; 4.15pm Choral Evensong CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Eucharist, Stanford in C, The Treasurer, 25 December 8cm Hc. (Joan Malins, Stanford in G. The Bishop; 11am Sung Eucharist, Messe solennelle (Vierne), The Dean 5 20cm 25 (Joanne)

5 30pm Evensong
COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 25 December 7.40am Morning Prayer, 8am HC; 10.30am Cathedral Eucharist for Christmas Day, Durke in F. The Bishop: 530pm Evening Prayer at the Crib. DERBY: CATHEDBAL: 24 December 11 30pm Midnight Eucharist. 25 December 8am HC, 10am Matuss: Jam Sung Eucharist; 530pm Evensong. DURHAM CATHEDRAL: 25 December 8am RC. Canon Trevor Willmott: (0am Malins, Vaughan Willams in G. The Dean; (11.8am RC, Missa brevis in D. (Mdzart), The Bishop: 3.30pm Evensong, St

Fault Service (nowes): ELY CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm First Eucharist of Christmas, Darke in E. The Bishop. 25 December 8 ISam HC, Canon John Inge: 16.30am/Sung Eucharist, Missa brevis in G (Mozard, The Dean, 3.45pm Evensong with Carols, Jesus College service (Mathias). EXETER CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11 20pm

Watchnight Service, The Minister: 25 December ram 8am HC; 9.45am Procession and Sung Eucharlst; U.15am Mottins; fpm Evensong with Carols from the Ministrels' Gallery. GLOUI ESTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December opm Christmas Carol Service with Blessing of the Crib. 2 December 10.15am Sung Matins in the Quire; 0.45am Eucharist. The Bishop. GUIL OFORD CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.45ph Midnight Eucharist, 25 December 8am HC, 9.5am Sung Eucharist; 11.30am Matins, 4pm Catheiral Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. HERSFORD CATHEDBAL: 25 December 8am HC with hydnns; 10am Procession and Catheiral Eucharist, The Bishop: 11.30am Chord Matins. The Dean; 3.30pm Choral Evenson and Procession.

LEICESTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11 Sugn Midnight Eucharist, 25 December 8am HC: 1) 30am Choral Matins; 12pm HC. JCHFIELD CATHEDRAL: 24 Decei 11.30pm Midnight Mass (broadcast by the BBC, pleas be seated by 11.10pm). 25 December Barn HC: B 30am Sung Eucharist of Christmas Day, Missi Sancti Nicolai (Haydn), The Bishop; 5.30pm Evedng Prayer.

# CHURCH SERVICES



Choristers at King's College, Cambridge

Procession, The Bishop: 11,15om Matins, The Dean; 3.45 pm Choral Evensong and Processio with Carols.

LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL: 25 December

10.30am Festival Eucharist for Christmas Day. Coronation mass (Mozart). The Bishop.

MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass, Msssa Sancti Johannis d Deo (Haydm, The Bisbop, 25 December 8.45am Matms: 9am Bucharist; 10.30am Sung Eucharist,

NORWICH CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11,15pm

Midnight Eucharist of Christmas, The Dean, 25 December 10:30am Family Eucharist of Christmas Day, The Bishop: 3:30pm Festal Evensong.

Eucharist, 10am Sung Matins, The Bishop; 11,15am Sung Eucharist, The Dean; 6pm Evensong, PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL: 24 December

11.45pm Solemn Eucharist, The Bishop. 25 December 7.30am, 8.15am HC; 10am Family Eucharist, The Dean: 11.30am Matins, The Precentor; 3.30pm

Evensong and Procession.
PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: 24 December

11.30pm Midnight Moss, Messe de minuit (Charpentier), The Provost, 25 December 8am HC: 9.30am Parish Eucharist with Carols, Missa brevis (Kodaly), The Bishop: 4pm Evening Proyer.

(Kodaly), The Bibliop, spin archive and RIPON CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm

lidnight Eucharist. 25 December Bam Eucl 30am Choral Eucharist; 11.30am Christmas

Day, The Bisnop: 3.50pm restal Evensong.
Procession and Carols.
OXFORD, Christ Church, 25 December 8am

esmesse (Mozart). The Dean

NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL: 24 Decemb 11.30pm Blessing of the Crib and First Eucharist of Christmas. Canon Peter Strange. 25 December 8.m HC: 9.30am Procession and Solema Sung Eucharist, The Bishop. David Rose

Matins with Carols; 12,30pm Eucharist; 5,30pp Eventsong with Corols Around the Crib.
ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL 24 December 11.34pm Midnight Mass, Messe solemelle (Langlais), The Bishop, 25 December 8am HC; 10.30am Sung Eucharist, Messe solennelle (Vierne), The Dean; 5.30pm Evensong, ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL; 24 December 11.30pm Sung Eucharist. 25 December 8um HC with Carols: 9.30am Parish Eucharist, The Bishop; 11.15am Malins, The Dean; 12.30pm HC. SALJSBURY CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.45pm Midnight Muss. The Bishop, 25 December 8am HC: 10am Sung Eucharist, The Dean: 11.45am Family Service: 3pm Choral Evensong, Procession and Blessing of the Crib. SHEFFELD CATHEORAL: 24 December

11.30pm Midnight Eucharist with the Cathedral Choir. 25 December 10.30am Sung Eucharist with SOUTHWELL CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.45pm First Communion of Christmas. 25 December 8am HC; 9.30am Parish Communio 11am Matins; 12.15pm HC; 3.15pm Evensong

TRURO CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass. 25 December 8am HC; 10am Solerun Sung Eucharist; 5pm Evening Prayer. WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: 21 December 1 Midnight Mass. 25 December 8am HC; 9,15am Parish Communion; 11am Solemn Eucharist. WELLS CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm First Communion of Christmas, Bistop Jim. 25 December 8am HC; 9.45am Christmas Thanksgiv-ing and Eucharist. The Dean; 11.30am Malins, 3pm

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Sung Eucharist. 25 December 8am HC:

10am Matuns: 11.15am Sung Eucharist; 3.30pm Choral Evensong, Choral Evensong,
WORCESTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December
11.30pm Midnight Eucharist. 25 December 7.15 am
Matins; Bam HC; 8 30am Family Eucharist; 11am
Stang Eucharist; 4pm Evensong

BANGOR CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm First Mass of Christmas, Ireland in C. The Dean. 25 December 2am HC. The Dean; 9.45am Cymun Bendigald, Esgob Bangor, 11am Choral Eucharist, Little organ mass (Haydin, The Bishop. Little organ mass (Haydin). The Bishop.
BRECON CATHEDRAL: 25 December 7am HC:
Bam HC with Carols: 11am Sung Eucharist and
Sermon; 5-45pm Choral Evensong.
CARDIFF, Llandalf Cathedral: 24 December
9,30pm Procession, Blessing of the Crib and
the First Eucharist of Christmas. 25 December
7am Holy Eucharist, 7,30am Matins and Litany;
8am Holy Eucharist: 5am, 1145am Procession
and Parish Eucharist: 12,15am Holy Eucharist;
12,30pm Evensong.

NEWPORT CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Mars, Fr David Matthews. 25 December Barn Eucharist of the Dawn; 10 Juan Sung Eucharist of the Day, The Bishop of Monmouth. ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass. The Dean 25 December Bam Holy Eucharist. With Carols, 110m Choral Eucharist, The Archbushop of Wales; 2.30pm Evensong.

ABERDEEN, St Andrew's Cathedral: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass, Rarwood in / Bat 25 December 10.45am Sung Eucharist, Mer-

ABERDEEN, St Machar's Cathedral: 24 Decem ber 11pm Festival Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, The Minister 25 December 11am Family Service with HC, The Minister. DUNDEE CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Eucharist, The Bishop, 25 Dece 10.30am Eucharist with Carols. EDINBURGH, St Giles' Cathedral: 24 Decem-

her 1130am Watchingh! Service. The Minister. 25 December 2am, (0am Morning Service (HC). The Minister; 1130am Morning Service (HC). The Minister; 1130am Morning Service The Minister. EDINBURGH, St. Mary's Cathedral: 23 December 1130pm Midnight Mass, Messe de minuit (Charpentier), The Provost. 25 December 1030am Pestal Eucharist, Missa brevis in D (Mozart), The Bishop of Edinburgh. GLASGOW CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.15nm

GLASGOW, St Mary's Cathedral: 24 Decembe 11:30pm Midnight Mass, The Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway. 25 December 8:30am Eucharist 10am Sunc Éucharist: 120m HC. INVERNESS CATEDRAL: 23 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass, The Bishop of Moray, Ross and Carthness: 25 December 8.15am HC; 9.30am Family Eucharist; 11am Sung Eucharist, The Provost.

BELFAST CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11:30pm Midnight Communion, The Dean: 25 December 10cm HC; 11cm Christmas Eucharist, The Bishop

BIRMINGHAM, St Chad's Cathedral: 25 December 12am Midnight Mass, The Archbishop: 11am Mass, The Cathedral Administrator. LIVERPOOL, Metropolitan Cathedral: 24 December 11.15 pm Carols and Christmas Music; 11.30pm Midnight Mass, The Archbisbop, 25 December 9am Mass (broadcast live on BBC Radio 4). The Archbishop: 10am Family: 11am Solenin Mass; 630pm Vigil.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Eucharist, Missa Sancti Nicolai (Havdn), Canon Stephen Oliver: 25 December 8am HC: 8.45am Matins, 11am Sung Eucharist, Missa Sancti Nicolai (Haydn), The Deam: 3.15pm Evensong, Stanford in C.

Stanord in C.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 24 December 11.30

Sung Eucharist of Christmas Midnight, Messe solennelle (Langlais), The Very Rev Dr Wesley Carr. 25 December 8am HC: 10.30am Sung Eucharist of Christmas Day. The Very Rev Dr Wesley Carr. 12.15pm HC: 3pm Pestal Evensong, Kelly in C.

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11 30pm Midnight Mass, The Bishop, 25 December 9am Christmas Eucharist with Carols, The Provost; 11am Christmas Choral Eucharist, The Provost, 11am Christmas Choral Eucharist, The Provost. ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, Southwark: 24

December 11:30pm Carols and Rearings, followed by Solemn Mass of the Nativity, Archbishop Michael Bowen. 25 December 8am Mass with Car ols: 10am Family Mass, Archbishop Michael Bowen, 11:30am Choral Mass. WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11:50pm Wigil and Middleth Mass. 25 December

11.15pm Vigil and Midnight Mass. 25 December 7am. 8am Mass: 9am Family Mass with Carols:

# The seasonal silence of a blank greeting

IT IS Christmas and there-fore time for churches to modern-day public domain. grass background. Another centred on a family grieving attempt once more to say something meaningful about a season that seems to have lost its way. The difficulty seems to be in finding the right words, as many a church noticeboard will amply testify.

These wayside pulpits have, over the years, made numerous attempts to remind the passing public of "the reason for the season". In recent times they have come up with naff lines like "Give Jesus your Christmas Presence" or dubious attempts to get really modern with the Bad Hair Day line -"You're a virgin, you've just given birth. and now three kings have shown up . . . '

The trouble is that such slogans are more likely to have raised a chuckle among wet and wintry churchgoers than to have appealed to those beyond the frontiers of faith. This time last year the Christian Advertising Network tried to address that fact with a poster which read: "Christmas - copyright: It's not a genuine Christmas without Church". Sympathetic as I am to the organisation and its mission, I beg to differ. Nobody "owns" Christmas. The patent on a "genuine" Christmas is not the property of the Church, and never has been. Christmas belongs to the people; and if the Church owns many interpretations of its meaning, it cannot lay claim to all

Launcelot Andrewes, in his Christmas Day sermon of 1620, describes the incarnation of Christ as "the Word that cannot speak". In using this phrase, he meant to draw his listeners to the powerlessness of Christ. He also points to the heart of the problem for religious advertising.

of them.

In contemporary life it is the image which is generally accepted to carry the greatest power. But religion, and particularly Christianity, communicates primarily through words rather than images: it is aural and oral rather than visual; cognitive rather than expressive. Apart from the

It could be argued that the most effective forms of Christian advertising are visual. Cathedrals are sermons in stone; paintings homilies on canvas. Yet, whilst there is some truth in the maxim that "the camera is a blunt instrument compared to a pen

and the imagination", the relationship between words and images has changed in contemporary culture. Today. once more, much as in the medieval times of mass illiteracy, it is the image that takes us to the text.

More than that the Bible is no longer a principal source

# **MEANINGS CHRISTMAS**

MARTYN PERCY

The modern Church has abandoned the ambiguity of the image and

taken refuge in the dull safety of words. It is time to revert to ancient instincts

of morality, functioning as a rule book; rather it has been transformed into source of spirituality, which acts as a guide. Its stories have superseded its didactic as the wellspring of its power. Thus, the meaning of the Good Samaritan is more important than the Ten Commandments even assuming that the latter could be remembered in any detail by anyone.

Into this milieu it is the image which speaks with most potency. Secular advertising understands this well. Benetton, the clothes manufacturer, has run ads for many years that use no text to convey the "United Colours of Benetton" global message. Interestingly many of them exploit situations where once religious imagery would have little that appears to com- of white crosses, with a green titute. Sheffield University

around an emaciated and dying man. Another on a birth. And Benetton has even exploited overtly religious imagery with a controversial shot of a monk and a num, both dressed in black and white

robes, exchanging a kiss. The images are striking for their simplicity: they cover themes such as the commonality of humanity, peace, reconciliation, life and death. Without using words, the ads speak through the pictures to the themes implied in the words "united" and "colours". They convey a moral message, arresting the viewer and inviting reflection.

Why can't the churches do the same? One answer to this must lie in with the recurring tradition of iconoclasm which strove to suppress images in places of worship. They did so, in part, because images cannot be controlled in the way words can - people participate in stories and images at their own level: there is an in-built multiplicity of meaning; truth is plural. In their desire to delimit doctrine, reform and rule, Protestant and Catholic churches have frequently fled from the image and sought the sanctuary of words.

Yet Christ is not a text. Christmas is "the word made flesh" - a most striking visual image. And he comes as a child - the Speechless Word who is God. So, here is my suggestion for an advertisement for Christmas, A simple photograph of a mother and child sitting in some hovel. The child sucks greedily at the breast, and, in the background, there is the shape of a figure trying to make a fire to keep them all warm.

This image - of interdependency, warmth, vulnerability. poverty and need - does not require any text. Yet it tells the Christmas story in a simple frame. It might not drive people to church. But it might at least make us stop for a moment and think, as we pass by with the last-minute shopping, hurrying home to our own Christmas.

neld sway. Recent ads have - Martim Percu is Director of ity has no logo for its Logos; included a military cemetery the Lincoln Theological Ins-

# BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

# **DEATHS**

WNTERFLOOD: Peggy, died Iriday 18 December. Mother of farion. Our sympathies are tith you, Marion, from Lesli, Inne. Beverley, Ginnette. Lileen, Jim. Brian, Richard, ohn, Bob, Mike, Steve and

# IN MEMORIAM

CLCHRIST-FISHER: Alasdair

ARIKIAN: In loving memory of Manoug Parikian, who died on Christmas Eve. 1987.

# CHANGING OF THE GUARD

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards. 11am; 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Welsh Guards, TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS. MARRIAGES & DEATHS Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries. In memoriam) are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra.

Mr M. T. Preston and Miss A. Manley The engagement is announced between Mark, Preston, of Coleford. Gloucestershire, and Mrs Mrs Frank Manley, of Devon. The marriage will take place on 17 July 1999.

BIRTHDAYS former diplomat, 66; Mrs Mair Barnes, chairman, Dollond and Aitchison, 54; tant. Barclays Bank and former cricketer, 66; Sir Hodge, ambassador to Thailand, 55; Ms Helen Kelleber, former director, WRAC, 83; Sir Ivan Tribune, 55; Miss Thea Mr Norman Rossington, actor, 70; Mr John D. writer, 38; Mr Philip

TOMORROW: Princess Alexandra, 62; Princess 82; Miss Sheila Browne, College, Cambridge, 74;

## FORTHCOMING **MARRIAGES**

younger son of Mr Richard Lesley Broughton, of Welney, Cambridgeshire, and April, younger daughter of Mr and Newhayes Farm, Whimple,

TODAY: Mr Alistair Baillie, Mr John Barron, actor. 78; Professor Anthony Clare. psychiatrist, 56; Lord Cowdrey of Tonbridge, consul-Gerald Elliot, former chairman, Christian Salvesen, 75: Mr Jeremy Hindley, horseracing trainer, 55; Sir James Jones MP, 44; Dame Joan Lawrence QC, former MP, 62; Dr John Marek MP, 58; Miss Suzy Menkes, fashion editor, International Herald Porter, fashion designer, 71; Taylor MP, 61; Miss Caroi Vorderman, broadcaster and Ziegler, writer and editor, 69.

Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, 97; Lord Annan, writer, former Principal, Newnham

Department of Health, 57; Mr Brian Connelly, diplomat, 57; Mr Nick Conway. actor, 36; Mr Quentin Crisp, writer and performer, 90; Mr Edward Davey MP, 33; Ms Barbara Follett MP, 56; Professor Christopher Frayling, Rector and Vice-Provost, Royal College of Art, 52; The Right Rev Noel Jones, Bishop of Sodor and Man, 66; Miss Annie Lennox, singer, 44: Professor Philip Love. Vicesity, 59; Mr Tony Martin, singer and actor, 85; Sir Peter Matthews, former

Professor Sir Kenneth Cal-

man, chief medical officer,

Chancellor, Liverpool Univer-Chief Constable of Surrey, 81; Mr Ismail Merchant, film producer, 62; Professor Phyllida Parsloe, former Warden of Wills Hall, Bristol University, 68; Mr Lawrie Quinn MP, 42; Mr Noel Redding, rock musician, 53; Mr John Sharman, former High Commissioner to the Seychelles, 61; Lord Sheppard of Didgemere, former chairman, Grand Metropolitan, 66; Miss Sissy Spacek, actress, 49; Mr Nigel Starmer-Smith, sports commentator, 54; Sir Noel Stockdale, life president of the ASDA group, 78; Mr Stephen Twigg MP, 32; The Right Rev Benjamin Vaughan, former Bishop of

# **ANNIVERSARIES**

Swansea and Brecon, 81; Sir

executive of Wates Building

Christopher Wates, chief

Group, 59.

TODAY Births: John Lackland, King of England, 1167; St Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, 1491; William Warburton, bishop and scholar, 1698; James Prescott Joule. physicist, 1818; Matthew Arnold, poet and critic, 1822; Louis Jouvet, actor and

director, 1887; Howard Robard Hughes, millionaire and recluse, 1905; Ava Lavinia Gardner (Lucy Johnson), actress, 1922.

Deaths: Sir Thomas Beaufort. Duke of Exeter, admiral and commander, 1426; Vasco da Gama, explorer and navigator, 1524; William Makepeace Thackeray, novelist. 1863; Frank Richards (Charles Harold St John Hamilton), writer and creator of "Billy Bunter", 1961; Peter Lawford, actor, 1984; John James Osborne, playwright and actor, 1994.

On this day: an attempt was made to assassinate Napoleon I, 1800; Britain's first self-propelled vehicle was tested by Richard Trevithick, 1801; William Burke body-snatcher, went on trial, 1828; part of the Capitol, Washington, and almost the whole Library of Congress was destroyed by fire, 1851; Giuseppe Verdi's opera Aido was performed for the first time, Cairo 1871; the Coliseum Theatre, London, opened, containing Britain's first revolving stage, 1904; Ahmed ben Zogu (later King Zogi overthrew the Albanian government and proclaimed a republic, 1924; the Apollo 8 spacecraft orbited the moon and sent back a Christmas message, 1968.

Today is Christmas Eve and the Feast Day of St Adela, St Delphinus, St Gregory of Spoleto, St Irmina, St Sharbel Makhlouf and Saints Tharsilla and Emiliana.

TOMORROW Births: Noel Coypel, painter, 1628; Sir Isaac Newton, mathematician, physicist and astronomer, 1642; Dorothy Wordsworth, writer and sister of the poet, 1771; Charles

Pathé, film pioneer, 1863;

Maurice Utrillo, painter.

1883; Conrad Nicholson Hilton, hotel proprietor, 1887; Dame Rebecca West (Cecily Isabel Fairfield), writer, 1892; Humphrey DeForest Bogart, actor, 1899; Cabell (Cab) Calloway, jazz singer and bandleader, 1907.

Deaths: Pope Adrian I, 795; Sir Matthew Hale, Chief Justice and law reformer, 1676; W.C. Fields (William Claude Dukenfield), film comedian, 1946; Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin, comedian and film producer, 1977; Joan Blondell, actress, 1979; Joan Miró, artist, 1983; Nicolae Ceausescu, former Romanian president and his wife. Elena, executed by firing squad 1989; Dean Martin (Dino Paul Crocetti), singer and actor, 1917.

On this day: William I, "the

Conqueror", was crowned in Westminster Abbey, 1066; Vasco da Gama sighted the African coastline of what is now Natal, 1497; the Mayflower arrived at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, 1620; the Great Frost of London began, when temperatures were 17 degrees below freezing, 1730; George Washington crossed the Delaware river, 1776; the first Christmas tree was put up at Queen's Lodge, Windsor, by Queen Charlotte, 1800; the Emperor Hirohito acceded to the Japanese throne. 1926; the Stone of Scone was stolen from Westminster Abbey, 1951; Vaclay Havel was elected president of Czechoslovakia, 1989; the Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev, announced that he had resigned all offices, and that the Soviet Union was

Tomorrow is Christmas Day and the Feast Day of St Alburga, St Anastasia of Sirmium, St Eugenia and the Martyrs of Nicomedia.

officially disbanded, 1991.



# LITERARY NOTES

CEDRIC CULLINGFORD

# A writer who was too famous too early

THE VERY name of Mrs Humphry Ward suggested to subsequent generations an old-fashioned notion of the great and the good. Not only was she born an Arnold but she actually did carry out a great deal of charitable work. She was mildly satirised by Aldous Huxley in Eyeless in Gozo as well as by Ezra Pound: "And he talked about 'the Great Mary' / and said 'Mr Pound is shocked at my levity When it turned out he meant Mrs Ward." He also paints ber as an awesome personality meting out good to "her cripples". In fact Mrs Humphry Ward was practical rather

than lofty. She knew, for example, the ways in which committees work, they taught her that ideas were only interesting in terms of the way in which they were talked about or otherwise connected to the wider world. Her attitude towards them was as equivocal as her attitude towards society:

Lady Barbara was a committee woman, indefatigable and indiscriminate. She lived and gloried in a chronic state of overwork for which no one but herself saw the ty. (The Mating of Lydia)

The problem is that this portentous reputation also clings to her novels. This is a pity. And it is also completely inaccurate. As a result all the novels that were so admired by Henry James remain out of print

early and for the wrong reason. Her first book. Robert Elsmere. was published in 1888. It was reviewed earnestly and at length by W.E. Gladstone, who dwelt almost exclusively on the philosophical argument. The book deals with enlightened doubt, with the question of the extent to which morality and spirituality can be separated from the Christian faith. It is a novel of ideas rather than a good novel. Its fame dominated Mrs Ward's subsequent reputation so that even her lightness of touch was read as if she were still as weighty, and as faintly ridiculous, as in this book.

Humphry Ward wrote from Lady Rose's Daughter in 1903 to Eltham House in 1915 are ironic and acute satires on Edwardian society. They analyse not political ideas but the way that people use and manipulate them. They trace the decay of the landed families and their political influence. They delineate difficulties in relationships, especially in marriage. Even though she took on the propriety of her husband's name, her actual view of intimate relationships remained sharp and bleak.

The novels that Mrs

Mrs Ward analyses the way in which ideas depend on perpersonal ambition. She depicts £15.99)

the fate of one too famous too risies that keep society intact: Lady Grossville made no excuses ficiently ambitious hostess to know that agreeable parties are not con-structed out of the saints alone. The men therefore must provide the sinners; and of some of the persons then most in vogue she was careful not to know too much. (The Corystone Family)

Mrs Humphry Ward reflects the "necessary" social hypoc-

Unhappy marriage is not a rare gesture in Mrs Ward's novels; heroines marry an unsatisfactory man more often than not, in a society in which little could be done about it, not that she believed in divorce. She is one of the earliest novelists consistently to explore the deterioration of a marriage because of unsuitability of temperament. Daphne, ostensibly about divorce, is really about a selfish, limited woman and an

indulgent, stupid man. Whilst Mrs Humphry Ward's novels are out of print they are still widely available in second-hand bookshops, not only in Hay-on-Wye. Several deserve to be reprinted but first it must be recognised that what she offers is not like Robert Elsmere. She offers irony, lightness of touch and intelligent analysis. It is no wonder that Henry James admired her.

Cedric Cullingford is the sonal relationships, and the author of 'Children's Literaway that politics depends on ture and its Effects' (Cassell,

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# America the beautiful

No more Britpop in '98. Not many Australian soap stars either. As for 'distaff distorto grunge-victims', well, they've seen better days. No, 1998 was the year in which American pop began a heady renaissance. The evidence? Our critics' choice of 10 CDs of the year



BECK Mutations

PERHAPS THIS year's most intriguing development has been the end of the assumption that musical innovation will automatically originate on the dance floor. Not that stadium behemoths will ever stop seeking vindication in the fairy dust of an over-priced remix, but an increasing volume of traffic is now moving the other way, as horny-handed beat-farmers come down from the hills in an urgent quest for old school rock charisma. It's a manor of which Beck is undisputed boss, and his Mutations - supposedly just a bit of fun with his touring band while gearing up for a "proper" next album – is a gleaming monument to its diverse possibilities. Owing as much to The Beatles' Revolver as The Beasties' Paul's Boutique, these are space-age bachelor-pad cowboy laments of transcendent and enduring quality. Honourable mentions to Air's Moon Safari (Virgin), and Glaswegian Arab Strap's rumbustious Philophobia

TORI AMOS

(Chemikal Underground).

Choirgirl

BEN THOMPSON

THIS ONE threw us for a loop. The flame-haired temptress with a million voices in her head spoke in her own on Choirgirl, an unleashed, autobiographical affair. Cathartic release could be due to the fact that Tori's no longer a relationship-damaged waif, but a smugly happy wife. With that in the mix, a side we hadn't seen roared kaleidoscopically off the disc. Bashing her Bosendorfer alongside heavy bass and electric guitar. Tori went Led Zep. Elsewhere, we had references to Jackie Kennedy. David Cassidy, Pandora and Persephone - Amos was this year's chart-topping goddess.

Other contenders? Almost alone, Polly Harvey carried the flag for distaff distorto-grunge victims. Is This Desire? (Island) reached uncharted territory, so far west of Yeovil, it seemed located in America's desert badlands. Lucinda Williams's Car Wheels on a Gravel Road (Mercury) took a more rural American route, her sweet folk voice telling us of the heat and dust, the beat-up and broken-down.

**GLYN BROWN** 



Moon Safari

THE PRAISE heaped upon Air is as much a result of their repair job on French music as the fact that they have produced the most bewitching retro-futuristic album of the year. They have often been aligned with the clattering vibrations of their compatriots, Daft Punk, but, in truth, they couldn't be further apart. Moon Safari is an otherworldly foray into some of the more tender moments of the last three decades. "Kelly Watch the Stars" and "Sexy Boy" epitomise Air's sound: soothing Serge Gainsbourg-style vocals, processed through a vocoder and set against Seventies' funk-jazz and Eighties' synth pop soundscapes. Smart and fluffy. uplifting and melancholy.

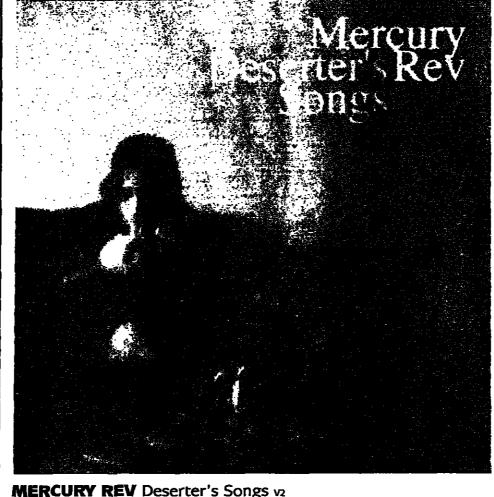
If I had to choose an album to accompany a stroll on the moon, it would indeed be this one. For more smart retro-futurism and vocoder wizardry, listen to the Beastie Boys' Hello Nasty (Grand Royal) and Bran Van 300's chaotic, self-titled début album (Capitol).

**FIONA STURGES** 



Two Pages

THIS YEAR saw the various genres of the UK dance scene in nostalgic mood. Such a climate even touched the futureobsessed drum'n'bass scene, most engagingly in the case of the breakbeat scientists, 4 Hero. In Two Pages they crafted an album which updates the classic soul of Marvin Gaye's What's Going On and Stevie Wonder's Innervisions with Detroit techno-inspired drum'n'bass. True, the album's inspirations are all drawn from the past, yet the duo rarely overdo the nostalgic reverie bit. They take their source material and contort it through a vibrant fusion of technology and imagination. Similarly inspiring were Jurassic 5 and Faithless. The former's brilliant eponymous album (Pan PIAS) combines the word play of old skool hip hop with new skool turntablism. Faithless fused classic UK house, the moodiness of Massive Attack and the energy of Motown to create the unique sound of their stunning second album, Sunday 8pm (Cheeky).



MERCURY REV Deserter's Songs v2

IN A year during which forward motion seemed for the most part stalled, bands continued to trawl through previous eras in search of inspiration, none more successfully than Mercury Rev. This was no simple Weller-style retro-rock appropriation, however. The heartbreakingly beautiful Deserter's Songs used halfremembered hints of old melodies or arrangements as poignant sepia-tint coloration for songs concerned, in part, with the very nature of recollection and reflection.

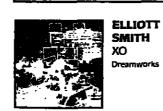
It's an extraordinarily

emotional record, somehow managing to sound both melancholic and euphoric, suggesting that for Mercury Rev the past is a much more complex, ambivalent territory than that encountered in, say, Oasis's cheery celebrations of old ways.

In this respect, Deserter sSongs is more representative of the current wave of American retro-rockers than of its British equivalent. For unlike the second-hand sound-stylists of Britpop. such bands as Sparklehorse, Lambchop and The Jon

Spencer Blues Explosion, and such solo artists as Beck and Gillian Welch, are all inspired as much by the pioneer nature of older music forms as they are by the music itself. The immediate result has been a succession of graceful, exploratory albums. whose appeal grows, rather than diminishes, with familiarity. Honourable mentions also go to Sparklehorse's Good Morning Spider (Parlophone) and Lambehop's What

Another Man Spills (City



SMITH XO

OF THE four Elliott Smith albums released in Britain in 1998, XO was the last, and by some distance, the best. Smith's hazy lyricism and lazy vocal were the key factors in a marvellous, gentle record. He has a knack for crafting obtuse, beguiling character sketches

and embedding them in the memory with expertly deployed one-liners: "They took your life apart/And called your failures art" might be a lament for every consumptive singer-songwriter who has preceded him.

Smith is, of course, an obvious heir to a lineage that includes Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Elvis Costello and Kurt Cobain, but he's also the brightest of a new bunch of unfairly disregarded American songwriters. Conventional wisdom seems to be that American rock died with

Cobain. In truth, it's quite healthy - it just doesn't sound that way Along with Ben Folds, E of Eels and Mark Linklous of Sparklehorse, Smith has taken the familiar grunge themes of dislocation and alienation and examined them from a more reflective, less histrionic, and far less self-abasing perspective. XO is a masterpiece. Honourable mentions should also go to Sparklehorse's Good Morning

Strider and Eels' gloomy

Electro-Shock Blues ANDREW MUELLER

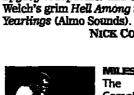


LOVETT Step Inside This House

TEN YEARS ago this sort of thing was called New Country. New Country wore a cowboy hat, not with irony but with contingent pride; it cleaved to Country idioms but aligned itself intellectually with the world beyond Nashville's moral catchment; it was neat and tidy on the outside, but scruffy in its soul. Now it's a supporting leg of the coffee-table mainstream - not alt.country but art-country: currently white American pop's most sophisticated property.

Lovett will politely concede that, if nothing else, this doublelength collection of other Texans' songs enables him to duck questions about whether he's still boiling his head over Julia. What we must concede is that this is the most playable length-and-line art-country record there's been, by a man. Texas sounds like a real place for once, inhabited by real people. You should also hear Emmylou Harris's elegant Spyboy (Grapevine) and Gillian Welch's grim Hell Among the

NICK COLEMAN



MILES DAVIS Complete **Bitches Brew Sessions** 

THE IMPULSE! label is all-round iazz re-issue champ for 1998. It's given stylish new life to its Coltrane back catalogue and is now embarked on the noble project of revivifying the late-Sixties/ Seventies New Thing, as if it were indeed a new thing.

However, the label responsible for the single most impressive re-con job of the year is Sony's Columbia Legacy imprint. Their orgiastic slobber over Miles Davis's Bitches Brew sessions was profoundly worthy, not merely for its textured cardboard and aluminium finish. certainly not for the accompanying rubric, but for the complex loveliness of the music itself, which benefits hugely from being remastered to perfection and then laid out schematically over the length of four CDs as if it were, indeed, all part of the same musical continuum. Honourable mentions go to Coltrane's The Complete Classic Quartets (Impulsel) and Tina Brooks's hearthreaking Bock to the Tracks (Blue Note). NICK COLEMAN

**VARIOUS** ARTISTS The Voice of

A SURVEY of the traditional music of these islands ought to be an impressive affair. It ought to be grave, monumental, desiccated, worthy, unlistenable; it should chafe in its unwearable work boots. In fact, Reg Hall and Tony Engle's epic, 20-volume Voice of the People "anthology" is a delight: it is monumental and to a large extent grave, for sure, but it is also moving, involving and

enlightening, and, like all the best narratives, keeps you wanting to find out what happens next. Also, you don't have to fork out 300 fat ones for the privilege of owning the whole thing in a boxed set; you buy it piecemeal or you don't buy it at all. This has been a good year for tradition-driven music, both here

and in the States. Here, Eliza Carthy deservedly got on the Mercury shortlist for her imaginatively worldly Red Rice double album, while dad Martin made a splendid comeback of his own with Signs of Life. (No compensation, though, for the loss of Lal Waterson.)

NICK COLEMAN



MARCOTULLI The Woman Next Door

EVEN WHEN a musician goes into the studio and records his

or her current live set, a context of sorts still emerges according to the dominant mood, texture or tempo of the event. But when the setting of the context precedes the recording, we can end up with an album as complete, as satisfying, and as profound as The Woman Next Door by the Italian pianist Rita Marcotulli. Inspired by the films of François Truffaut, Marcotull has written a suite of tunes that relate to different them or characters, and then cast them for various permutations of a large ensemble. The result is wide-ranging music held together by the central concept and recurring motifs. It works as a whole in a way that very few jazz albums ever

manage to do. Two other albums of governed mood: the American pianist Brac Mehldau's Sonas (Warner Bros). and the veteran soul-jazz vocalist Terry Callier's Timepeace (Talkin' Loud/Verve).

PHIL JOHNSON

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# Nothing more than this? Depends what you mean

LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S Candide.
That's how the London Symphony feeling for the political agenda than she did for the musical comedy, and nod here, a little Rossini or Verdi Orchestra billed it here - presumably because listing all its collaborators on the title page of the programme would have left little room for anything else. Too many cooks spoiled the book. That is what happened to Candide, the musical. In the best of all possible worlds, it might just have worked: Voltaire's little novella turned very big operetta. But Lillian Hellman – who provided

subsequent rescue operations only added to the confusion. To quote one of its songs: "Words, Words, Words". No doubt about it, words have been the undoing of Candide. I've yet to see it work in the theatre, though Trevor Nunn and John Caird - who stage it at the National Theatre next spring - are plainly optimistic. So was Candide, of course.

There remains, though, that the show's original book - had more score - a marvel of pith and pastiche

there, a lot of Gilbert and Sullivan everywhere. All of it cohesively melded through the wit and wisdom of Bernstein's own musical voice. Bernstein's music is Candide's music, always aspirational, always reaching for the octave and beyond.

Nine years ago, London's Barbican Hall jumped to Candide's tunes. Bernstein himself (in what was his last Loudon engagement) couriered the conducted tour with a little belp CLASSICAL CANDIDE BARBICAN

from Dr Pangloss, better known as his old sparring partner Adolph Green. This time around. Nickolas Grace - rather more dexterous. physically and verbally - did the honours, wryly understating the topicality of his updated narration. A little more pace might better have con-

Voltaire's "picaresque" plotting, but his energy was, at very least, infectious. Not so the lacklustre con-

ducting of Kent Nagano. If the syncopated home straight of the Overture is not somehow impatient for the fun, froth, and frolic to come, then the chances are it's not going to be there. It wasn't. Neither was Nagano. Tempi were plodding,

veyed the whistle-stop nature of Easily Assimilated" is an invitation to join in the foot-stamping, brazen trumpets whacking out the offer you can't refuse. But for all Patricia Routledge's best efforts with the cas-

tanets, lift-off was postponed. Routledge stole the show. Her comic timing put some of the zest back into it. So, too, did Thomas Allen's deliciously sibilant Maximilian. Then there was the Jerry and never rose. The raucous flamenco and June Anderson (Cunégonde), climax of the Old Lady's Tango "I am sole survivors of the performances

from nearly a decade ago. Anderson still sports the dizzying E-flats, but not the irony that can make "Glitter and Be Gay" so killingly funny; Hadley is no longer quite so freshfaced or fresh-voiced, not least in those idealistic and once honeyed ascents above the stave. But he means what he sings, and that in itself made the disillusionment of "Nothing More Than This" the most poignant of tributes to a composer who never really knew just how good he was. EDWARD SECKERSON

# **CLASSIFIED**

MARTIN JAMES

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# A dose of the winter blues ON THE first pre-Broadway of this local croakiness seems

tour of South Pacific, Richard Rodgers reputedly broke up one of those smoke-filled latenight production meetings where people agonise over what to adjust and fix. "Fellas." he announced, "this show is perfect. Let's go to bed." And now, nearly 50 years later, there are few who would want to dispute such a claim. It's a struggle to remind yourself of this, though, when confronted with a revival as ropy as that directed by Deborah Paige at the Sheffield Crucible.

The poster invites you to "banish all your winter blues" with this masterly musical love story of an ageing cultured expatriate Frenchman and an unsophisticated young nurse from Arkansas who are thrown together during the war in the Pacific and almost come to

MUSICAL SOUTH PACIFIC SHEFFIELD CRUCIBLE

grief over the subject of race. Criss-crossed with duckboards, the Crucible's thrust stage certainly pushes the sun-kissed sea and sand into the audience's midst, with the undistinguished band visible at the back. Introducing choreography to a show that originally was notable for dispensing with it. Peter Darling gives the engaging line-up of sexually frustrated GIs a horny hornpipe and, as "There is Nothing Like a Dame" reaches its climax, a

sort of Half-Monty flourish. But there was so much coughing and spluttering in the theatre that you didn't know whether you were in an auditorium or a sanatorium. Some

to have infected the delectable Janie Dee, whose lanky, impish Nellie was in sadly enfeebled voice. When she failed to put full-throated rapture into the declaration "I'm in love with a wonderful guy", you tended to

Adams's hectoringly sung Emile has none of the romantic reserve and mystery necessary for this role. Intermittently entertaining, the production is too often misjudged. I have always been a

fervent supporter of colourblind casting. But drama which turns on the question of colour and race constitutes an exception. Given that Nellie's distaste for the idea that Emile is the woman is a major stumblingblock in their romance, it makes little sense to cast two

children who look as if they are of clearly different races as the offspring of that union. And while the black actor Cornell John is extremely winning as Luther Billis, the unit's comically unsuccessful would-be war profiteer, colour-blind casting sympathise because Mark again raises problems. When he and Nellie perform "Honeybun" at the Thanksgiving Follies - she as a male sailor and Luther as a dusky native maiden with coconuts for breasts the fact that the number is a raucous travesty of another racially sensitive relationship in the show loses its sharpness if Luther is already a non-white. Some enchanted evening? No, some way short of that,

widower of a Polynesian A version of this review appeared in later editions of yesterday's paper

3

PAUL TAYLOR



Shades of 'The Conversation': Will Smith and Gene Hackman take paranoia into overdrive

# Bugs, boys and big bangs

urveillance is fast becoming Hollywood's theme du jour. First The Truman Show dramatised the comical yet paranoid fantasy of a life unwittingly snent under the scrutiny of 5,000 concealed cameras. Then Brian De-Palma, always a keenly voveuristic director, explored the sinister new possibilities of surveillance technology in Snake Eyes, which featured an astonishing elevated tracking shot over National Security Agency. a cross-section of hotel bedrooms -Tom. Indeed, in a year when Bill Clinton has found his privacy impossible to defend, the conspiracy theorist's credo that Big Brother is watching us feels increasingly plausible.

In Tony Scott's new thriller Enemy of the State, paranoia goes into overdrive. The tone is set in the credit sequence, a hysterical montage of grainy swoops and zooms filmed from on high by panoptic spy satellites; here is the security state in action, we're Haing told, as street riots and rowdyan are coldly monitored from above and swiftly quashed by the batonwielding authorities on the ground.

About to experience the full might of these digital thieves of liberty is a young DC labour lawyer, Robert Clayton Dean (Will Smith), who is buying his wife Christmas lingerie when an old college friend tears past him out of the shop and thence to an early grave, courtesy of a collision with a Mack truck. Unbeknown to Robert, his late friend slipped him a tape that captures the murder of a senior congressman by rogue forces in the

The chief rogue in question is one part recording angel, part peeping Thomas Brian Reynolds (Jon Voight). who understandably wants to get his hands on the tape. He decides to make Robert the target of a smear campaign, sending in his spooks to bug the lawyer's whole wardrobe - pen, watch, cell phone, shoes, trousers - and then discredit his reputation. Soon enough, he finds his name splashed all over the newspapers as a philanderer, his wife (Regina King) kicks him out of the house, and, horror of horrors, all his credit cards are mysteriously cancelled. In desperation he turns for help to an old girlfriend, Rachel (Lisa Bonet), acting as intermediary for the mysterious Brill, a former intelli-

1/ Shali We Dance?

was a comedy about

stiff who finds he's got

Norwegian Pal Sletaune's

debut is a blackish comedy

about a shifty postman

pinching other people's

mail. By a combination of

nosiness and bad luck be

Hitchcockian nightmare of

only film this year I paid to

3/ In the Company of Men

A gripping and fantastically

unpleasant essay in male

competitiveness, Neil

upon two white-collar

a jaundiced look at

company men in

the Nineties, and

you fear it may be

like the truth.

Inin Softley's

Henry James

novel is an

adaptation of the

Dove

telling us something

4/ The Wings of the

LaBute's début focuses

executives who scheme to

avenge themselves on the

opposite sex. The film takes

stalking and blackmail. The

named Roy who likes

involves himself in a

watch again.

insecurity and

2/ Junk Mail

THE BIG PICTURE



ANTHONY QUINN

ENEMY OF THE STATE (15) DIRECTOR: TONY SCOTT STARRING: WILL SMITH. GENE HACKMAN, JON VOIGHT 128 MINS

gence operative who has gone underground. That he's played by Gene Hackman is both the film's trump card and a reminder of its source, namely Francis Ford Coppola's The Conversction (1974), in which Hackman played the surveillance genius Harry Caul. Brill is essentially Harry 25 years later, right down to the black spectacles and the wire-meshed lair

full of bugging equipment. Just in case we miss the parallel, there's a tense rendezvous in a public square that's a pure homage to the opening scene of Coppola's film. The difference between the two

films, however, is conspicuous - and

instructive. The Conversation was a thriller, but was also a study in one man's spiritual desolation; Harry, a Catholic and a loner, is guilt-ridden by a bugging job he once did which resulted in a grisly double murder, compounding his obsession with privacy he won't let anybody near him. You can watch The Conversation over and over and still find some new detail each time. How you long for such nuance in Enemy of the State. Sure, there's a creepiness in its early stages as Robert gets sucked into the vortex of technological tyranny, and Will Smith, stripped to his underwear at one stage, does a good impersonation of

flummoxed decency. Yet the stamp of its makers - producer Jerry Bruckheimer and director Scott - inevitably begins to show through. For example, it's not enough that Brill and Robert simply flee their bolt-hole once the NSA locate its

whereabouts - no, their exit has to be followed by the building being blown sky-high in a humungous explosion; a Bruckheimer special. The film becomes a sequence of chases, down a tunnel, along railway sidings, across notel roofs, all set to the shuddering percussive soundtrack beloved of these steroid-packing action movies. All that's missing is the signature Bruckheimer shot of the leading characters walking abreast in slo-mo towards camera; fine if they're fighter pilots or astronauts, of course, but heroic group shots of leather-jacketed goons with ear-pieces and hand-

guns might look a touch out of place.

Throughout, the editing has the fre-

netic, blink-and-it's-gone intensity of a trailer, as if a pause for thought tion. This, I'm afraid, is what the Hollywood blockbuster has come to. Even when it alights on a potentially interesting idea, it basn't the wit or nerve to let character take precedence over spectacle - chases, fireball explosions, the full shooting match. Maybe this explains why so many movies are beginning to look like one another. Now there's a conspiracy for you.

# **ALSO SHOWING**

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME VINCENT WARD (15) THE MIGHTY PETER CHELSOM (PG) THE APPLE SAMIRA MAKHMALBAF (PG)



Robin Williams in What Dreams May Come

special effects, Vincent Ward's What Dreams May Come looks like the most expensive therapy session ever put together. Robin Williams, at his most ingratiating, plays a paediatrician whose family is dogged by death. First the family Labrador has to be put down; then his two children are killed in an off-screen accident; then be buys the big one in a freeway car crash and fetches up in an afterlife based on the impressionist landscapes painted by his wife (Annabella Sciorra). Driven insane by bereavement, she has committed suicide and been consigned to hell, so Williams, with the help of celestial tour guides Cuba Gooding Jr and Max Von Sydow, journeys downwards à la Orpheus to rescue her.

If any of the above has the whiff of dung, you're definitely in the right neighbourhood. While the production design has a breathtaking depth of colour (complete with art history references to Monet and Caspar David Friedrich) the film sets the alarm bells ringing from the moment Williams and Sciorra meet on a Swiss lake and declare themselves soulmates. Once death moves in, it's cue for a two-hour sob-feast in which earnest New Age waffle is exchanged with such reverence you'd think it had been penned by Aristotle.

In fact, this is the work of Ron Bass, whose fondness for sentimental verbiage (he also wrote Waiting to Exhale) made me wonder whether he hadn't missed his vocation in life as a Hallmark Card staff writer. Thought is real, physical is the illusion," somebody remarks. I wish that were true, then I could simply have "thought" I'd seen What Dreams May Come, and skipped the "physical" experience of its butt-numbing

More mystical whimsy in Peter Chelsom's The Mighty, a tale of two boys who don't fit in. Boring Day

LOADED WITH state-of-the-art Max (Elden Henson) is a teenage giant and a slow learner, Kevin (Kieran Culkin) is a pintsized intellectual with a degenerative disease. After their friendship is cemented by a shared regard for the legend of King Arthur, Max decides they'd work better in tandem and carries Kevin on his shoulders. Together they wow the basketball team, face off the school bullies and deal with the unwelcome return to the neighbourhood of Max's jailbird father. With an A-list cast in minor roles - Sharon Stone, Gena Rowlands, Harry Dean Stanton, Gillian Anderson - the film has its moments, but it does rather beg for our tears when a more softly-softly approach is required. You detect the Blackpool-born director straining in offbeat directions which the American schmaltz of The Mighty simply can't

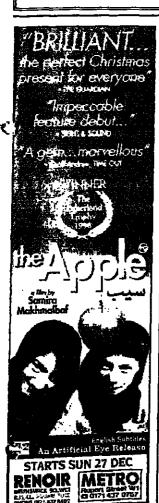
accommodate. The Apple is a peculiar first feature by Samira Makhmalbaf, 17-year-old daughter of Mohsen Makhmalbaf, the Iranian filmmaker. It recounts the true story, using the real family involved, of two innocent 12-yearold sisters who have been hidden from the world since birth. After neighbours complain to the authorities, a social worker (they have them in Tehran too) turns up at their home and forces their ancient, needy father to let them out. His reason for keeping them locked up: "My daughters are like flowers. They mustn't be exposed to the sun or they would soon fade." Dads. eh. The film's gentle humour comes to the fore once the girls are let munch apples, though concentration is vital for the film's leisurely pace to work. Once you've overcome somnolence, Makhinalbaf's inquiry into family life casts a weird spell.

All films are on release from

IN SATURDAY'S WEEKEND REVIEW

# The black swan

Nadine Meisner meets Carlos Acosta, a new dance sensation



# CRITIC'S CHOICE: THE TEN BEST FILMS OF 1998







extremely rare bird: a story from the Coen costume drama that values

the period props and folderol. It's not James, nor could it ever be, but it's certainly the most tragic exploration of answered prayers I saw all year. 5/ The Big Lebowski Jeff Bridges plays "the Dude", a slightly dopey,

psychological complexity

and emotional depth above

mild-mannered dropout, who crosses paths with a crippled billionaire and suddenly finds his life in danger - in short, it's another shaggy dog





Brothers, who've dreamed

6/ The Daytrippers One of the best independent films to come out of America this year, Greg Mottola's delightful comedy about a family outing to Manhattan contained wintry humour, poignant truths and the world's shortest car chase.

up a scenario notable for its

off-centre wit and complete

absence of meaning.

7/ The Spanish Prisoner David Mamet returns to the intricate layering of bluff and counter-bluff he finessed in his first movie. House of Games, all couched in that distinctively halting, rhetorical dialogue.

Campbell Scott, the most underrated young actor in America, turns in a sterling performance as the duped nice guy:

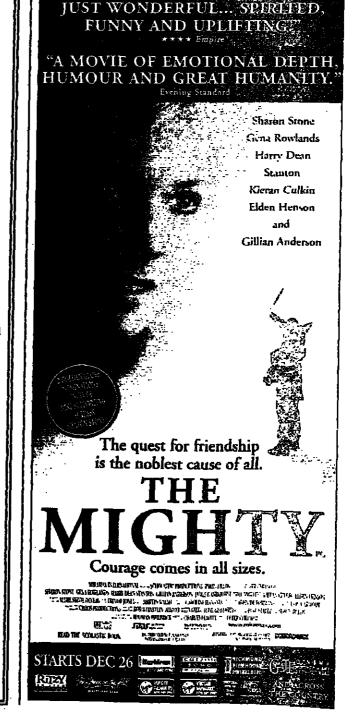
8/ Antz (below) Given his recent run of indifferent movies, this computer-animated comedy did at least remind us that Woody Allen is still capable of great timing. albeit in the guise of a worker ant. Top-drawer cast, blissfully funny script, and some of the spookiest animation you'll

9/ The Truman Show Perhaps not as great as some made it out to be, Peter Weir's satire on our enslavement to television was nevertheless an inspired and ingenious piece of movie-making; Jim Carrey also seized the opportunity to show he's a lot more more than an irritating rubber-faced contortionist.

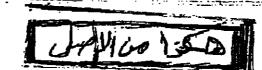
10/ Zero Effect Uh? Don't worry; hardly anyone else saw this small. but engagingly droll comedy, directed by firsttimer Jake Kasdan (son of The Big Chill Lawrence). Starring Bill Pullman as a wigged-out private eye and Ben Stiller as his sidekick. it had the affable charm and modest intentions of a good TV pilot.

Turkey of the Year Henry Jaglom's Déjà Vu, an improvised ensemble drama, was probably the most excruciating experience of the cinema year. His characters are the kind of awful chattering pseuds Woody Allen was satirising around 20 years ago, yet Jaglom for some bizarre reason takes them completely seriously. One nonsensical speech by Vanessa Redgrave concluded with the exhortation to "jump off the cliff of life", an

option I would have willingly helped the whole cast



"THIS CAPTIVATING DRAMA IS



## THE THURSDAY REVIEW The Independent 24 December 1998

# CHRISTMAS DAY TELEVISION & RADIO

7.45 Scrooge Koala's Christmas (8899212), **8.10** Alvin and the Chipmunks (4716941). 8.35 To Me.. to You (827003B), 9.00 Rotten Ralph (27835). 9.30 Teletubbies (46458). 10.00 Celebrate Christmas with Deborah McAndrew (16380). 11.00 FILM: Miracle on 34th Street (44162699). 12.50 Top of the Pops (8684477). 1.50 News; Weather (79556583). 1.55 The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show (5055729). 3.00 The Queen (1857854). 3.10 Noel's Christmas Presents (5699980). 4.10 Animal Hosoltal (7007854), 4.45 The First Snow of Winter (160767). 5.15 News; Weather (2017670). 5.25

BBC1

5.55 Auntie's Spanking New **Bloomers.** Terry Wogan introduces a festive selection of out-takes and clips (S) (T) (930496).

EastEnders (8721038).

6.30 Changing Rooms Christmas Special. Carol Smillie and the team travel to the Scottish isle of Arran (S) (T) (816).

7.00 GHOIGE Babe (Chris Noonan 1995 Aus). Talking pig's bacon is saved by talking sheepdog. See Film of the Day, below (S) (T) (51187).

8.30 EastEnders. Bianca and Grant put aside their differences just as Grant's prospects take a dip (S) (T) (2477).

9.00 Before They Were Famous III. Samantha Janus, Leonardo DiCaprio and Robson Green are among the then unknowns (242670).

9.40 News; Weather (1) (281477).

9.50 CHOCE Men Behaving Badly. The three-part Christmas special starts here. See Comedy of the Day. below (S) (T) (541854).

10.35 They Think It's All Over. Guests are Jonathan Ross, Phil Comwell and Colin Montgomerie (S) (T) (848564).

11.10 A Many Splintered Thing (S) (102372), 11.40 The People's Nativity (808941). 11.45 Robbie Williams -For One Night Only (S) (T) (539699).

12.35 Elimi Carry On Girls (Gerald Thomas 1973 UK), Sid James holds a beauty contest and the feminists complain. Those were the days (Then Weather) (T) (7398336). To 2.05am.

# BBC2

6.15 FILM: The Great Lie (90854), 8.00 FILM: The Treasure of the Sierra Madre (97767). 10.00 Oil Get off Our Train (90854), 10.30 The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends (9795800). 10.55 Here's Looking at You: 75 Years of Warner Bros (3730835). 11.45 FILM: Dodge City (15389941). 1.25 Gogs (58824106). 1.55 Big Hug: the Story of Teletubbies (9349-598). 2.35 Rex the Runt (1425903), 2.45 The Simpsons (6380470).

3.10 Casablanca (Michael Curtiz 1942 US). You must remember this... (T) (51904485).

4.50 Choir of the Year (8331361).

5.30 Nutcracker Sweeties (919903).

6.05 Tweifth Night (Trevor Nunn 1996 UK). Assured, strongly cast version of Shakespeare's seasonal comedy about a shipwreck which separates identical twins. With Helena Bonham Carter (Olivia), Imogen Stubbs (Viola), Nigel Hawthome (Malvolio), Richard E Grant, Ben Kinoslev, Mel Smith. imelda Staunton and Steve Mackintosh (S) (T) (70058922).

8.15 Close Up. Documentary exploring the life and literary achievements of Ted Hughes, who died in October. Seamus Heaney, Diana Rigg, Tom Paulin and John Carey come bearing plaudits (S) (T) (620583).

9.05 C:OCE Arena: The Brian Epstein Story. The first half of a two-part profile of the man who moulded The Beatles. See Profile of the Day, below (S) (T) (7548583).

10.20 The Queen (S) (503496).

10.30 Dance Lexie Dance (R) (602309)

10.45 Immortal Beloved (Bernard Rose 1994 UK). Dramatisation of the life of Beethoven, and the story of a quest to uncover the identity of the composer's mysterious "immortal beloved" after his death. With Gary Oldman (T) (664748).

12.45 Prick Up Your Ears (Stephen Frears 1987 UK). Gary Oldman again, this time as playwright Joe Orton (Then Weather) (507688). To 2.35am.

# ITV Carlton

6.00 GMTV (1936309). 9.25 Christmas Day in the Morning (S) (T) (1815583).

10.20 Children's ITV: Sooty and Co Christmas Special (T) (2962187). 11.00 Percy the Park Keeper (R) (2750651). 11.35 The Forgotten Toys (R) (S) (9811564). 12.05 The Willows in Winter (R) (S) (T) (7944583). 1.30 News; Weather (T) (45083545). 1.45 The Spice Girls Live at Wembley (\$) (T) (4083458). 3.00 The Queen (T) (1842922). 3.10 Christmas Disney Time (T) (3899908). 4.10 Jack and the Beanstalk (S) (T) (79320854).

5.45 ITN News; Weather (T) (206019).

6.00 Enamerdate. The Dingles get a Christmas miracle, while the Windsors must endure tragedy (S) (T) (43361).

7,00 Coronation Street. The Street raties round as Jack and Vera stage a sit-in. Judy gives birth (T) (1458).

8.00 You've Been Framed at Christmas. Lisa Riley heads to the Arctic Circle (T) (8038).

8.30 Who Wants to be a Christmas Millionaire? Chris Tarrant presents the guiz show in which contestants attempt to give 15 correct answers to win the top prize of £1 m#eon (T)

9.30 Christmases from Hell. Chaos at the school nativity play, revels turning into riots, malls gridlocked by frantic shoppers and an elephant upending Santa's sleigh (S) (T) (44106).

10.30 ITN News; Weather (T) (608583)

10.40 IIII The Godfather Part II (Francis Ford Coppola 1974 US). Coppola's sequel which extended and surpassed the original. An epic about the corruption of America. starring Al Pacino, Robert De Niro. Talia Shire, Robert Duvall and Diane Keaton (T) (84440125).

2.20 Shout at the Devil (Peter Hunt 1976 UK) Lee Marvin and Roger Moore star in this Wilbur Smith yam set in Mozambique during the Great War (67537591). To 4.45am.

# Channel 4

7.00 For Better or for Worse (31699). 7.30 Max Bear's Christmas (10106). 8.00 The Big Breakfast (37497699). 9.55 FiLM: Swallows and Amazons (94001361). 11.40 Bill's New Frock (1087496). 12.15 Famous Fred (R) (274309). 12.45 Father Christmas (266380). 1.15 FILM: Tom Thumb (T) (34687941). 3.00 Alternative Christmas Message (1840564).

310 The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery (Frank Launder, Sidney Gilliat 1966 UK), Not the old Alastair Sim originals but with Frankle Howerd and Reg Varney (63609813).

4.50 Countdown Grand Final (S) (T) (1205212). 5.35 Gilbert and Sullivan (922545). 5.55 The Queen (627926).

6.05 Hansel and Gretel. The Welsh National Opera's colourful production of Englebert Humperdinck's opera based on the Brothers Grimm fairy tale. Directed by Richard Jones, the opera is sung in English with Imelda Drumm as Hansel and Linda Kitchen as Gretel. The orchestra is conducted by Wladimir Jurowski (T) (75343309).

8.00 Bernstein. Two-part biographical documentary about the conductor and composer. It traces his rise to fame from his electrifying debut in 1943 with the New York Philharmonic to his final performance at the fall of the Berlin Wall (T) (8748).

9.00 FILM Remember Me? (Nick Hurran 1996 US). One of two Michael Frayn comedies on at the moment (the other is Noises Off on Channel 5). Rik Mayali and Imelda Staunton star as a couple caught in a stale suburban marriage who are caught somewhat off-guard when an old flame of Staunton's (played by Robert Lindsay) turns up on their doorstep (T) (75499019).

10.35 The Omen (Richard Donner 1976 US), Dial 666 for wellworn Satanic hijinks staring Gregory Peck, Lee Remick, David Warner and Harvey Stevens as little Damien (51098941).

12.40 FILM The Fly (Kurt Neumann 1958 US). The original version, starring Vincent Price (T) (786268).

2.15 The Return of the Fly (Edward Bernds 1959 US), Sequel to the above, again with Vincent Price (566539). To 3.45am.

# Channel 5

6.00 The Wind in the Willows (R) (25730477), 6.25 Roobarb (37227583), 6.30 Dappledown Farm (R) (44tt380). 7.00 Wimzle's House (R) (6854767), 7.30 Milkshake! (2493767). 7.35 Havakazoo (6058670). 8.00 George of the Jungle (R) (7469922). 8.30 What-a-Mess (7468293). 9.00 Loggerheads (7459545). 9.30 USA High (4868019). 9.50 Alpha Zone Christmas Special (6999941). 10.20 The Revelation Game (S) (9306854). 10.50 FILM: Scrooge -- A Christmas Carol (25057800). 12.30 Family Affairs (2090019). 1.00 Michael Flatley Talking with Sir David Frost (S) (T) (42755980). 2.05 FILM: Major Barbara (9067380). 4.05 FILM: Calamity Jane (11200564)

6.00 5 News Update (6286941).

6.05 Performance: Bryn Terfel. The Welsh baritone Brym Terfel in concert in Edinburgh (7320467).

6.35 Family Affairs. Christmas Day with the Harts (S) (T) (6749699).

7.05 Night Fever. Suggs hosts the karaoke entertainment show, with Philippa Forrester, Sam Kane, Kirsten O'Brien, Russell Boulter, Heather Pearce, Norman Pace, Tricia Penrose, John Attman, Sarah Matravers and Aled Jones (8824794).

8.00 Fort Boyard. Melinda Messenger presents the action-adventure game show set in a remote Napoleonic fortress off the north-west coast of France (S) (T) (6439293).

9.00 Noises Off (Peter Bogdanovich 1992 US). Thoroughly disappointing movie version of Michael Frayn's stage farce about a troupe of actors touring the States with a sex comedy. A shame really, because a first-rate cast could have really done something with the material if it had been better "opened out". With Carol Burnett, Michael Caine, Denholm Elliott, Julie Hagerty and Christopher Reeve (S) (T) (38510309).

10.55 Melinda's Big Night In. Guests include Jamie Theakston (S) (2725106).

11.35 **Yixen** (Russ Meyer 1969 US). Big-breasted kitsch (8786580).

12.55 Hickey and Boggs (Robert Culp 1972 US). Crime drama with Bill Cosby (2988862).

2.55 Sweet Hostage (Lee Philips 1975 US). Drama. To 4.40am.

# ITV/Regions

ANGLIA 6.00 GMTV (1936309), 9.25 6.00 GMTV (1936309). 9.25 Christmas Day in the Morning (1815583). 10.20 Sooty and Co Christmas Special (2962187). 11.00 Percy the Park Keeper (2750551). 11.35 The Forgotten Toys (981564). 12.05 The Willows in Winter (7944583). 1.45 The Spice Girls Live at Warmbley (4083458). 3.00 The Queen (1842922). 3.10 Christmas Disney Time (3899908). The Queen (1842922), 3.40

Christmas Disney Time (3899906).

4.40 Jack and the Beanstalk
(79320854), 6.00 Emmerdale
(43361), 7.00 Coronation Street
(1458), 8.00 You've Been Framed at
Christmas (8038), 8.30 Who Wants
to be a Christmase Milionaie?
(82903), 9.30 Christmases from
Heil (44105), 10.40 Film: The
Godfather Part II (84440125), 2.20
Film: Shout at the Devil (67537591),
4.45 Movie Magic (2465510), 5.35
Cartoons (3501846), 5.55 - 6.00
ITN Morning News (9337133),
HTV WALES

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ITN Morning News (9337133).

HTV WALES
6.00 GMTV (1936309). 9.25

Christmes Day in the Morning
(1815583). 10.20 Sooty and Co
Christmes Special (2962187). 11.00

Percy the Park Keeper (2750651).
11.35 The Forgotten Toys (981564).
12.05 The Willows in Winter
(7944583). 1.45 The Spice Girls
Live at Wernbley (4083459). 3.00

The Queen (1842922). 3.40

Christmes Disney Time (3899908).
4.10 Jack and the Beanstalk
(79320854). 6.00 Emmerdale 4.10 Jack and the Beanstalk (79320854) 6.00 Emmerdale (43361), 7.00 Coronation Street (1458), 8.00 You've Been Framed at Christmas (8038), 8.30 Who Wants to be a Christmas Millionaire? (32903), 9.30 Christmases from Heil (44106), 10.40 Film: The Godfather Part II (84440125), 2.20 Etm. Shout et the Devil (87537501) Film: Shout at the Devil (67537591). 4.45 Movie Magic (2465510). 5.35 Cartoons (3501848). 5.55 - 6.00 ITN Moming News (9337133).

MERIDIAN
6.00 GMTV (1936309), 9.25
Christmas Day in the Morning
(1815583), 10.20 Sooty and Co
Christmas Special (2962187), 11.00
Percy the Park Keeper (2750651),
11.35 The Forgotten Toys
(9811564), 12.05 The Willows in
Winter (7944583), 1.45 The Spice
Girls Live at Wembley (4083458),
3.00 The Queen (1842922), 3.30
Christmas Disney Time (3899908),
4.10 Jack and the Beanstak
(79320854), 6.00 Emmerdale MERIDIAN 4.10 Jack and the Beanstalk (79320854), 8.00 Emmerdale (43361), 7.00 Coronation Street (1458), 8.00 You've Been Framed at Christmas (8038), 8.30 Who Wants to be a Christmas Millionaire? (82903), 9.30 Christmases from Hell (44106), 10.30 TIN News; Weather (608583), 10.40 Film: The Godfather Part II (84440125), 2.20 Film: Shout at the Devil (67537591), 4.45 Movie Magic (2465510), 5.35 Cartoons (3501846), 5.55 - 6.00 TIN Morning News (9337133).

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5.00 ·

DISCO. 4.00 5.00

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WESTCOLINTRY
6.00 GMTV (1936309). 9.25
Christmas Day in the Morning
(1815583). 10.20 Scoty and Co
Christmas Special (2962187). 11.00
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(79320854). 6.00 Emmerdale
(43361). 7.00 Coronation Street
(1458). 8.00 You've Been Framed at
Christmas (8038). 8.30 Who Wants
to be a Christmas Milionaire?
(82903). 9.30 Christmases from
Hell (44106). 10.40 Film: The
Godfather Part II (84140125). 2.20
Film: Shout at the Devil (67537591). Godfather Part II (84-140125). 2.20 Film: Shout at the Devil (67537591). 4.45 Movie Magic (2465510). 5.35 Cartoons (3501846).

\$4C As Channel 4 except: 11,40 The Bear (17269361), 1240 Planed Plant (87427187), 3,00 The Queen's 157217699), 3,1 Christmas Message (57217699), 3.40 Planed Plant (63488019), 5.15 Countdown (88984767). 6.00 Newyddion (19752854). 6.10 Bryn Terfel Yng Nghastell Caernarfon (29019699). 740 Pobol y Cwm (25531831). 8.45 Ma' Han 'Ma Nadolig (34039125). **9.00** Film: Cameleon (31890670). **11.05** Father Ted Xmas Special (88937318). **12.10** Rising Damp (83302220). **3.45** Close. ALL OTHER ITY REGIONS

# COMEDY OF THE DAY

MEN BEHAVING BADLY (950pm BBC1, nght) Those who thought Seinfeld was being daring when it broached the subject of masturbation will be gob-smacked by this three-part Christmas special featuring Simon Nye's ageing lads. Gary and Dorothy are trying for a baby, but Gary can't oblige. Enter a pile of sex videos and jokes on the aforementioned topic. Not one to watch with Auntie Ethel then



# PROFILE OF THE DAY

ARENA: THE BRIAN EPSTEIN STORY (9.05pm BBC2, right) Paul McCartney, Marianne Faithfull and George Martin are among those sharing their memories of the Svengali-like figure behind the emerging Beatles. Epstein was gay at a time when homosexuality was still in the closet, and this handsome, richly evocative film follows him from his shopkeeping roots in Liverpool to his brokering of the Sixties.



# FILM OF THE DAY

BABE (7pm BBC1 right) Though it sounds like an awful blend of talking-animal whimsy and fashionable animal-rights diatribe, this animatronics fantasy is insidiously seductive. Babe is a piglet saved from a factory farm existence by smallholder James Cromwell - but is still destined for the Christmas dinner table. His bacon is saved by a sheepdog (voiced by Miriam Margolyes) and an aged ewe. But only if he can herd sheep.



# SATELLITE & CABLE

(976-998MHz FM ) 9.00 Zoe Bail's Christmas Breakfast, 12.00 Clive Warren. 2.00 A TOTP Christmas. 4.00 Chris Moyles's Alternativ Christmas. 11.00 Westwood. 2.00 Fabio and Grooverider. 4.00 -7.00 Envrsa B. RADIO 2

6.00 Rager Royle. 8.00 Good Moming Christ-mas. 10.00 Terry Wogan's Christmas Special. 11.00 Ken Bruce. Archive Christmas Stockings. 2.30 The News Special 3.00 The Queen. 3.10 Ed Stewart. 5.00 Christmas with Celne. 6.00 Pavarotti in Conversation with Paul Gambaccini, 7.00 Hubert Gregg. 8.00 Christmas at Bath Abbey. 9.15 Alan Freeman: Their Greatest Christmas Bits. 10.15 Listen to the Band: a Fenfare for Christmas, 11.00 Peace on Earth. **12.00** Lynn Parsons. **4.00 - 6.00** RADIO 3 (90.2-92.4MHz FM ) 6.00 On Air. 9.00 Masterworks 10.30 Artist of the

vveer. 11.00 Sound Stories. 12.00 Composer of the 1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert. 2.00 Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols 3.40 In Terra Pax. (R) 4.00 Dival. 4.45 Music to Die For. 5.00 A Medieval Christ-

6.00 Discovering Music with Leonard Slatkin.
7.00 Christmas Cock-7.30 Performance on 3. ten of the most memo-

5.30 Music Rooms.

London, 5: Prom 20. given on 1 August, brought Gershwin's ever green folk opera 'Porgy and Bess' to the testiva for the first time, in his centenary year. Its story of human aspirations of human aspirations provides a vivid political parable for our times Gershwin: Porgy and Bess. Willard White, bass (Porgy), Cynthia Haymon, soprano (Bess), Bournemouth Symphony Chorus, BBC Singers, BBC Concert Orches-tro Mouroe Morehell (B) tra/Wavne Marshall (R) 10.50 Postscript. Come dian and broadcaster Rainer Hersch presents five personal and idiosyncratic studies of the music of our century, 5 We'll Sort It Out in the made of the recording industry and what the recording industry has made of us. 1110 Schumann. 11.30 And His Mother Called Him Bill.

12-00 Composer of the Week: Bach. (R) 1.00 - 6.00 Through RADIO 4 (92.4-94.6MHz FM ) 6.00 NEWS; Something 7.00 NEWS; Open Country. 8.00 Joy to the World.

9.00 NEWS; Christmas

Morning Service. 10.00 NEWS; Desert

sland Discs Special

10.45 Under One Roof. 11.00 Christmas Panto.

12.00 NEWS; News;

Haven't a Clue - Christ-

1.00 The World at One.

1.02 Derek Cooper's Christmas Lunch

Shipping Forecast 12.04 I'm Sorry I

12.30 Screen Test.

mas Special

**12.57** Weather

rable concerts of the

1998 BBC Proms seaso

2.15 The Gemini Apes. 3.45 Colonel Clay Master of Disguise. 4.00 NEWS; The Queen. 4.10 With Pleasure at 5.00 A Night with the Owls. (R) 5.25 Life on Christmas

**RADIO** 

6.00 Six O'Clock News. 6.05 I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue Christmas 6.30 News Quiz of the 7.00 NEWS; The 7:15 Front Row. Mark Lawson and Francine Stock unwrap a selection of spectacular hits and disastrous flops from the arts over the past year 7.45 Under One Root Concluding the first of

three five-part dramat tions from the Michele Janet Maw, Edna Dore and Luisa Bradshaw-White, 8.00 NEWS; Correspondents Look Ahead. Senior BBC correspondents from around the world join Alex Brodie for a look ahead to 1999 and the stories that will dominate the airwaves next year. 8.45 Letter from Ameri-

ca. Alistair Cooke with another slice of Americana.
9.00 NEWS; Christmas
Panto. 'Cinderella and
Her Very Ugly Sisters' by
Stewart Permutt and Debbie Barham, The shocking story of Cin-dereita and her facially retold.

challenged sisters is 10.00 NEWS; With Pleasure at Christmas. Sue MacGregor selects her favourite pieces of prose and poetry. 10.45 Book at Bedtime Chosen for Christmas. Five stars read their cho-sen seasonal tale. 5: Judi

Dench reads 'The Snow Queen by Hans Christ-11.00 The Modern Magi. The second of two programmes in which three modern magi retrace the steps taken almost 2,000 years ago. As they approach the place of Christ's birth, Rowan Williams, Bishop of Monmouth. Professor Heather Couper, astronomer, and Paul lely of the Independent ask: who is the child the modern age seeks, and what are the signs to follow? (R) 11.30 Revealed Lives.

11.45 Christmas Night imeditation. **12.00** Life on Christmas 12.30 The Late Book: Out of Her Senses. 12.48 Shipping 1.00 As World Service. 5.30 World News. 5.35 Shipping Forecast 5.40 Inshore Forecast. 5.45 Prayer for the Day. 5.47 Lelsure Update.5.56 - 6.00 Weather. RADIO 4 LW (198kHz ) **12.00 - 7.00** Test

Match Special RADIO 5 LIVE (693, 909kHz MW 6.00 The Life and Death of Belfast Celtic. (R) 7.00 Breakfast. 9.00 Sportscall 10.00 The Best of Camobell 12.00 Spotlight 98. 1.00 Up All Night - All 4.00 The Best of Rus-

coe and Co. 6.00 Gadget Special 7.00 A-Z of Entertain-8.00 A Green Christmas. Alan Green settles back with a host of celebrity guests to reflect on the highs and lows of the sporting year. 9.00 Brief Lives. 5 Live's obituary column. 10.00 20th-Century Vox

 Family Life. Sybil Ruscoe chronicles changes in family life and what the family has meant to 11.00 Late Night Live Insight and comment on the day's big issues with Brian Hayes, including Papertalk, 10.30 Sport, 11.00 News, 11.15 The Financial World Tonight 1.00 Up Al Night. 4.00 Extra Time. (R)

5.00 - 6.00 Brief Lives. CLASSIC FM (100.0-101.9MHz FM ) 6.00 Michael Fanston 8.00 Jamie Crick 12.00 Alan Mann's African Afters, 2.00 mas Afternoon, 7.00 Classics at Seven. 9.00 Concert. 11.00 Michael Mappin. 2.00 Christmas at St Pauls. 3.00 - 6.00 Mark Griffiths. **VIRGIN RADIO** (1215, 1197-1260kHz MW 105.8MHz FM ) 6.00 Jeremy Clark. 10.00 Russ Williams. 2.00 Nick Abbot. 6.00 Wheels of Steel 11.00 James Merritt. 2.00 •

6.00 Richard Allen. WÖRLD SERVICE RADIO (198kHz LW ) 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Small Worlds. 1.45 Short Story. 2.00 New day. 2.30 People and Politics. 3.00 World News. 3.05 Business Report. 3.15 Sports. 3.30 Science in Action. 4.00 Newsdesk. 4.30 Weekend, 5.00 News-day, 5.30 Outlook, 5.55 - 6.00 Spotlight.

TALK RADIO 7.00 Russel Grant. 11.00 Nancy Roberts 3.00 Mike Allen. 7.00 Bennett. 8,00 Nicky Home's Access All Christmas. 11.00 The Worst of Whale. 2.00 8.00 Gordon Astley.

SKY PREMIER 6.00 The Ef Who Didn't Believe (1997) (94922). 8.00 D3: the Mighty Ducks (1996) (39767). 10.00 Bar-man and Robin (1997) (13552). 12.00 An Amen-(13552). **122.00** An American Tail (1986) (97854). **1.30** The Barry Norman Interview (98835). **2.00** First

lerview (98835), 2.00 First Kid (1996) (47125), 4.00 D3: the Mighty Ducks (1996) (6699), 6.00 Batman and Robin (1997) (27361), 8.00 Michael (1996) (39106), 10.00 Jerry Maguire (1996) (33785380), 12.20 The Long Kiss Goodright (1996) (379607), 2.20 The War of the Roses (1989) (196369), 4.20 - 6.00 The Eff Who Didn't Believe (1997) (37997). Believe (1997) (372997). SKY MOVIEMAX 6.00 Family Blessings (1996) (64545). 7.30 The Phantom (1996) (76979106). 9.15 The Land before Time 4: Journey through the Mists (1996) (44620583). 11.00 Spiceworld the Movie (1997) (48651). 1.00 The First Wives Club (1996) (22477). 3.00 A Holiday for Love (1996) (22729). 5.00 The Phantom (1996) The Phantom (1996) (53274), **7.00** Spiceworld the Movie (1997) (89419816). **8.45** The First Wives Cub (1996) (5073381). **10.30** (NSS) (SUNSS) (NSS) (NSS

ions (1992) (109210). SKY CINEMA 4.00 Going My Way\* (1944) (70228187). 6.15 The Lemon Drop Kid\* (1951) (37533903). **8.00** Rebec-(3/3330) (47295039). 10.15 Plaza Suite (1971) (4640039). 12.10 The Tak-ing of Petham 123 (1974) (6624997). 1.55 None but the Lonety Heart\* (1944) (8513084), 3.50 Hollywood Hall of Fame (52291572) 4.20 The Two-Headed Spy (1958) (90846152). 5.50 Close(). FILMFOUR 6.00 Koyaanisqatsi (1983) (2835670), **8.00** The Big Blue (1988) (83377767).

10.45 Betty Blue Documentary (1620835). 11.10

Betty Blue (1986) (54491477). 2.15 Subway (1985) (6471684). 3.55 -6.00 Slacker (1991) DISCOVERY CHANNEL 4.00 Rex Hunt's Fishing Adventures (8711090). 4.30 Walker's World (8717274).

5.00 Cornections 2 by James Burke (2177563). 5.30 Jurassica (8731854). 6.00 Animal Doctor 6.00 Animal Doctor (878767). 6.30 Ways of the Wild: Cover Story (Wild Discovery) (2281980). 7.30 Beyond 2000 (8718903). 8.00 The Christmas Story (800pm-12.00): Mysterious Man of the Stroud (5428458). 9.00 History of the Dead Sea Scrolis (5431822). 10.00 Myths of Markind: Flood (5443093). Mankind: Flood (5441309). 11.00 On the Trail of the New Testament (537645). 12.00 America Exposed (7625607). 12.30 America Exposed (7657292). 1.00 Connections 2 by James Burke (955773). 1.30 Anchest Maries (955773). 1.30 Anchest Maries (955773). cient Warriors (9807607).

SKY ONE 8.00 Bump in the Night (86309). 9.00 The Simp-sons (67477). 9.30 Count Duckula (13598). 10.00 What.A-Mess (16816). 10.30 Orson and Olivia (56361). 11.00 The Other Wase Man (81467). 41.30 Wise Man (81467). 11.30 The Gio Friends Save Christmas (31926). 12.00 Oz Kids in Little Wizard Stories (70941), 12.30 Oz Klds in Little Wizzard Stories (1353-4), 1.00 Santa and the Desert Children (54564). **1.30** Jingle Bell A Prik Christmas (4729). 3.00 The Queen's Christmas Message (6621477) 3.05 Secret World of Se ta Claus (7287309), **4.00** Christmas Duckula (8309). 4.30 The Glo Friends Save Christmas (7293), 5.00 Oz Kids in Little Wizard Stories (4090), 5.30 Oz Kids in Lit-

tle Wizard Stories (8545). 6.00 Santa's First Christ-

mas (5458), **6.30** A Pink Christmas (9038), **7.00** The

Simpsons (4854), **7.30** The Simpsons (8922), **8.00** The

Simpsons (1354), **8.30** The Simpsons (9309), **9.00** Sinjsons (294), King of the Hill (1294), 9.30 King of the Hill (8699), 10.00 King of the Hill (7167), 10.30 King of the Hill (57090), 11.00 Duckman (91458), 11.30

Duckman (32800), 12.00 7.00 Long Play (9929607). Sky Sports 1 7.00 Trans World Sport (20372). 8.00 World Wrestling Federation Su-perstars (70831). 9.00 Sky Sports Centre (45903). 10.00 Soccer AM Christ-mas (24361). 12.00 Sports Top 20 (69922). 2.00 What a Weekend (8380). 2.30 Cliff Richard Christmas Procelebrity Termis (51361). 3-30 Fishing (20125). 5-30 Soccer AM Christmas Spe-cial (70496). 7-30 Sports Top 20 (98390). 9-30 What a Weskend (3547), 10.00
Cliff Richard Christmas Pro-celebrity Termis (55545), 11.00 Ice Skating World Challenge of Champtons (88545), 12.00 Extreme Sports (62864), 1.00 World Westing, (55406, 3, 00 Wrestling (55249), 3.00 Fishing (16572), 5.00 -6.00 Christmas Pro-celebrity Tennis (81713). SKY SPORTS 2

7.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (3232090). 7.30 Football League Review (3251125). 8.00 What a Weekend (2116293), 8.30 Futbol Mundral (2115564), 9.00 Fish TV: Martin World Cup 1998 (4436583), **11.00** Cricket (3237545), **12.00** Ciff Richard Celebrity Ten Christoff Calebray (epinis (3291899), 1.00 (ce Skating World Challenge of Champions (3277019), 2.00 H2O (1410923), 2.30 Gilette World Sport Special (9003125). 3.00 Cricket (8532767). 4.00 What a Strong Man - Weider Strong man 1 venues Strongman Tournment (4904125). **8.00** Cricket (3280583). **7.00** World Sport (2109039). **7.30** Wild Spirits (9084090). **8.00** Ice Skating World Challenge of Champions (6600019).

9.00 Cricket (6613583). 10.00 Extreme Sports (6616670). 11.00 World

Sport (8512903), 11.30 in-

v England (8964)25). **2.00** World Sport (50)0862). **2.30 - 7.00** Cricket Australia v England (4554713). SKY SPORTS 3 12.00 Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook (26783496), **1.30** Trans World Sport (50501564).

2.30 The Rugby Club (87079767). 3.30 Football Leegue Review (93638212 4.00 Futbol Mundal (93624019), 4.30 Trans 6.00 Extreme Sports (48878767). 7.00 Fish TV -Tony Dean Outdoors (67506835). 7.30 Fish TV (93614632). 8.00 Superbikes - Foggy's Hat-trick (65112293). 10.00 World Wrestling Federation Raw (47213748). 12.00 Close. **EUROSPORT** 

EUROSPORT
7.30 Xtrem Sports: Yoz
Action (14564): 8.30 Xtrem
Sports: (14854): 9.30
Olympic Games (66293):
11.00 Football (92789):
12.00 And They Walked
Away (29616): 1.00
Strength (38564): 2.00
Football (89125): 4.00
Sumo (32729): 5.00 Martal Arts (3835): 6.00 Fun
Sports (7458): 6.30 Bloop-Sports (7458), **6.30** Bloopers (7458), **6.30** Bloopers (1038), **7.00** Motor Sport (84670), **8.00** Optoal (80954), **10.00** Bowing (80954), **10.00** Bowing (80954), **10.00** Krem Sports (80950), and the sports (80954), and the sports (80954). Sports (50011). 12.00 Div-ing (48713). 12.30 Xirem Sports: Yoz Action (43715). 1.00 Close.

UK GOLD 7.00 Crossroads (9337203) 7.30 Neigh-bours (4264477, 7.55 EastEnders (4671854) 8.30 The Bit (8987274) 9.00 The Bit (8901854) 9.30 Price and Prejudice (9076748) 10.30 Angels (8907038) 11.00 Dallas (331748) 11.55 Neigh-bours (32760699) 12.25 EastEnders (2194748) 1.00 Price and Prejudice (7250903) 2.00 Dallas (6424187) 2.55 The Bit (6424187) 2.55 The Bit (693033) 3.25 East-Enders (9188534) 4.30 Angels (76230670) 4.55 7.00 Crossroads

Film: Carry On Christmas: Carry On Abroad (1972) (20787380). **6.45** Only Tools and Horses
(19818699). 8.30 The Comedy Alternative: Dad's Army
(39564458). 9.50 Carrott's
Commercial Brasildana Commercial Breakdown 3 (13552458). 10.55 Men Be having Badly (5510293). 11.55 Only Fools and Horses (8815922). 12.35 Blackadder's Christmas Carol (2317688), **1.30** The Bill (9809065), **2.00** The Bill (1082794), **2.30** Live at Jongleurs (11148997), 2.55 • 7.00 Shopping with Screenshop (48614607).

LIVING 6.00 Tiny Living (9396767) 9.00 Christmas Glory (3047699) 10.00 Films An American Christ-mas Carol (1979) (1622496). 12.00 Films Winds Down the Winds Down the Wind\* (1961) (7344019). **2.00** Diana; a Day in the Life (7358212). **3.00** Films: Miracle on 34th Street\* (1947) (1756212). **5.00 Film:** Un-Rely Angel (3147380), 7.00 Films: An American Christmas Carol (1979) (1402816), 9.00 Jerry Springer Triple Bil (6210038), 11.30 Christmas Carolana (1979), 11.30 Christmas Carolana (1979), 11.30 Christmas (1970), 11.30 Chri mas Crackers: the Best of Living's 'Sex Files' (7353767). 12.00 Close.

9.00 WCW Nitro on TNT (34044496). 11.35 WCW Thunder (57881729). 1.30 Alfred the Great (1989) (36917866). 3.30 The Day They Robbed the Bank of England' 1980) England\* (1960) (50492862) **5.00** Close. PARAMOUNT COME-

PARAMOUNT COME-DY CHANNEL, 7,00 Clueless (7038), 7,30 Desmond's (3496), 8,30 Roseame (3458), 8,30 Roseame (3458), 9,30 Roseame (3293), 9,30 Roseame (3487), 9,30 Roseame (3487), 9,30 Roseame (3487), 9,30 Roseame (3487), 11,30 Roseame (3487), Sanders Show (78212) 12.00 Late Night with David Letterman (62846). 1.00 Taxi (37355). 1.30 The Cribic (42775). 2.00 Dr Katz (21355). 2.30 Scap (82602). 3.00 Hooperman (77591). 3.30 Newtonad (17591): 3.30 Nightstand (24442). 4.00 Close.

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12.00 The Midday News.

7.30 All Ye Faithful A look back

at the days when football matches

were played on Christmas Day. Fans talk about cutting up the

Christmas turkey to make sand-

wiches, the players about having

to miss their children unwrapping

presents. With John Motson and

Gareth Southgate. Presented by

plores the legacy of the troubled

by revelations over the use of the

9.00 Brief Lives. 5 Live's obituary

10.00 20th-Century Vox - Good Time Britain. Sybil Ruscoe goes in

search of the different ways that

20th-century Britain has given it-

11.00 Late Night Live. Incl 10.30

Briefing. 11.15 The Financial World

Sports Round-Up. 11.00 News

5.00 - 6.00 Brief Lives. (R)

6.00 Nick Bailey. 8.00 Henry

certo. 3.00 Jamie Crick. 7.00

Kelly. 12.00 Requests. 2.00 Con-

Classics at Seven. 9.00 Concert.

11.00 Michael Mappin. 2.00 Con-

certo. 3.00 - 6.00 Mark Griffiths.

(1215, 1197-1260kHz MW 1058MHz FM)

6.00 Jeremy Clark, 9.30 Russ

Williams, 1.00 Nick Abbot. 4.00

Harriet Scott. 7.30 John Hipper.

1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Composer

of the Month. 2.00 Newsday. 2.30 Focus on Faith. 3.00 World

News. 3.05 World Business Re-

port. 3.15 Sports Roundup: the

Best of France '98. 3.30 Assign-

ment. 4.00 - 7.00 World Today.

6.00 Breakfast Show with Sally

Meen. 9.00 Scott Chisholm. 12.00

Lorraine Kelly. 2.00 Anna Raeburn.

4.30 Peter Deeley. 8.00 Mike Allen. 1.00 - 7.00 Gordon Astley.

7.00 Crossmads (64)8881), 7.30 Neigh-

10.00 James Merritt. 1.00 -

**WORLD SERVICE RADIO** 

1.00 Ruscoe and Co.

7.00 News Extra.

panned drug EPO.

self a good night out.

1.00 Up All Night.

CLASSIC FM

VIRGIN RADIO

6.00 Richard Allen.

(198kHz LW)

TALK RADIO

TIK GOLD

4.00 Extra Time. (R)

(100.0-101.9MHz FM)

column

4.00 Drive.

# CHRISTMAS EVE RADIO

RADIO 1 (97.6-99.8MHz FM ) 6.30 Chris Moyles. 9.00 Simon Mayo. 12.00 Kevin Greening. 2.00 The Best Mark & Lard Show in the World. Ever!. 4.00 Dave Pearce. 6.00 Pete Tong's Essential Selection. 9.00 Judge Jules. 11.00 Sanctified Dance Party. 1.00 Gilles Peterson. 4.00 -9.00 Emma B.

TVERegions

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RADIO 2 (88-90.2MHz FM) 6.00 Alex Lester. 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan. 9.30 Ken Bruce. 12.00 Steve Wright's Christmas Million Sellers. 2.00 Ed Stewart. 5.05 Johnnie Walker. 7.00 Saturday Night Fever. 8-00 Paul Jones. 9.00 Barry Took's Comedy Classics. 9.30 Love 40 - New Balls Please. 10.00 Paul Gambaccini. 11.00 Carols by Candlelight. 11.59 Pause for Thought. 12.00 Katrina Leskanich. 3.00 - 4.00 Mo Dutta.

RADIO 3 (90.2-92.4MHz FM ) 6.00 On Air. 9.00 Masterworks. 10.30 Artist of the Week. 11.00 Sound Stories. 12.00 Composer of the Week:

1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Con-2.00 The BBC Orchestras. 4.00 Diva!. 4.45 Music to Die For. 5.00 A Medieval Christmas.

5.30 Music Rooms. 6.00 Discovering Music with Leonard Slatkin. 7.00 Christmas Cocktails. 7.30 Performance on 3. Another chance to hear ten of the most memorable concerts of the 1998 BBC Proms season at the Royal Albert Hall, London. 4: Prom 65, given on 6 September, honoured the life and achievement of the late Sir Michael Tippett with a performance of his oratorio 'A Child of Our Time'. Deborah Riedel (soprano), Nora Gubisch (mezzo), Jerry Hadley (tenor), John Tomlinson (bass), London Symphony Chorus

and Orchestra/Colin Davis. Beethoven, arr Davis/Matthews: String Quartet in E flat, Op 127. Tippett: A Child of Our Time. (R) 9.35 Postscript, Comedian and broadcaster Rainer Hersch

6.00 A Christmas Carol (1984) (48521).

8.00 Angels in the Attic (1997) (33386)

1.45 Angels in the Attic (1997) (518163). 3.45 I'll Be Home for Christmas (1998)

162786), 7.30 Hollywood Buzz (4231).

8.00 Anna Karenina (1997) (85618). See

(1996) (384960), **11.50** Extreme Measures

(1996) (437845). 1.50 Edie & Pen (1996)

(875835). 3.30 - 6.00 Empire Records

6.00 The Night of the Grizzly (1966)

(79950989), 7.45 Miracle on 34th Street

(1973) (10400502). 9.30 Flipper (1996)

5873). **11.00** Where the Red Fem

Grizziv (1966) (87434), **5.00** Miracle on

34th Street (1973) (66106). 7.00 Flipper

view (2540), 9.00 Anaconda (1997)

Mess Part II (1991) (87873). 1.00 Malaika (1997) (93076). 3.00 The Night of the

(1996) (43502). 8.30 El News Week in Re-

(86347). **11.00** Bulletproof (1996) (921892).

12.25 Kissing a Dream (1995) (524903). 2.00 Lurking Fear (1994) (6770361). 3.20 - 6.00 The Rose (1979) (57825699).

4.00 Bringing Up Baby (1938) (7309095).

**6.00** Father Brown (1954) (9715057). **8.00** Holiday Affair (1949) (2120328).

9.30 Hollywood Hall of Fame (1668298).

See Pick of the Day. 10.00 The Guns of

Nevarone (1961) (26517569), 12.35 The

Laughing Policeman (1974) (2558212).

2.30 The French Connection (1971)

4005075). 4.15 Earth vs the Flying

Saucers (1956) (53313212), 5.35 Close.

6.00 Une Femme Est Une Femme (1960)

(2875296), 8.00 Walking and Talking (1996) (2847415), 10.00 Miami Pinapsody

(7609835), 2.40 - 6.00 The Shawshank

4.00 Rex Hunt's Fishing Adventures (8751618). 4.30 Walker's World (8740502).

Animal Doctor (8761095). 6.30 Living in

Extremes (2221908). **7.30** Beyond 2000 (8741231). **8.00** Science Frontiers: The

ceberg Corneth (5451786). 9.00 Wheels and Keels: The Liners (5464250). 10.00

(1995) (4317637). 11.40 Trainspotting

Redemption (1994) (28636309).

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

10.00 The Preacher's Wife (1996) (54724).

12.00 A Christmas Carol (1984) (530095).

SKY PREMIER

(1995) (912380).

SKY CINEMA

FILMFOUR

SKY MOVIEMAX

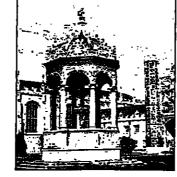
### PICK OF THE DAY

SO FAR AS Radio 4 is concerned. the message of Christmas is all about God, over-eating and end-of-year retrospectives. God is represented today with the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols (3pm R4) live from King's College Chapel in Cambridge (right), and by Midnight Mass from Lichfield Cathedral (11.30pm R4).

Eating is represented by a

selection of short food-centred readings called Petits Fours scattered through the schedules between now and Boxing Day. Looking back on '98 are The Year in Westminster (8pm R4)

with Boris Johnson and Steve Richards - no doubt taking great pains to avoid mentioning Peter Mandelson's sex life - and Pick of the Year (10pm R4). ROBERT HANKS



presents five personal and idiosyncratic studies of the music of Phrasebook. our century. 4: 'The Rite Stuff', An 5.00 PM. abbreviated guide to the great, the 5.57 Weather good and the ugly musical pre-

9.55 Fibonacci Sequence. Introduced by Nicola Heywood Thomas. Mozart: Oboe Quartet in F, K370. Beethoven: Quintet in E flat for piano and wind, Op 16. 10.45 Book, Music and Lyrics. Six programmes in which Robert Cushman presents a personal view of musicals, with songs from original cast recordings - some familiar, some less well known, 3: 'Ziegfeld Follies of 1936'. 11.30 Jazz Notes

12.00 Composer of the Week: Bach. (R) 1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

RADIO 4 (92.4-94.6MHz FM ) 6.00 Today. 9.00 NEWS; In Our Time with Melvyn Bragg. 9.30 Carols for Choirs. 9.45 Serial: Scraps with lannucci. 10.00 NEWS; Woman's Hour. 11.00 NEWS; From Our Own Cor-11.30 Pollyanna.

12.00 NEWS; You and Yours. **12.57** Weather. 1.00 The World at One. **1.30** Hidden Treasures. 2.00 NEWS; The Archers. 2.15 Afternoon Play: The Teahouse Detective. 3.00 NEWS: A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. See Pick of the Day.

4.30 Word of Mouth's Festive

6.00 Six O'Clock News. 6.30 The Worriers. 7.00 NEWS; The Archers. 7.15 Front Row, Mark Lawson with a seasonal edition of the arts pro-

gramme 7.45 Under One Roof. The first of three five-part dramatisations from the Michele Hanson stories. With Janet Maw. Edna Dore and Luisa Bradshaw-White (4/5). 8.00 NEWS; The Year in Westminster. A special review of the year in which the Blair government came of age. Michael White of the Guardian recalls the policies, the

scandals, the personal and political triumphs and defeats, which made up political life in 1998. He discusses the year's main themes with regular presenters Boris Johnson of the Daily Telegraph and Steve Richards of the New Statesman. See Pick of the Dav. 9.00 NEWS; Ground Control. The fast in a four-part series in which Angela Lamont reports on the technology behind some of Britain's biggest civil engineering

projects. This week, the Eden Project in Cornwall, described as the world's largest greenhouse. 9.30 in Our Time with Melvyn Bragg. Melvyn Bragg and guest discuss ideas and events which have influenced our time. 10.00 NEWS; Pick of the Year. The very best of the year's broadcasting on BBC radio celebrated

SATELLITE AND CABLE

by Peter White. See Pick of the

Sands of Time'. In the first of two programmes, three modern magi retrace the steps taken by the Wise Men almost 2,000 years ago. Rowan Williams, Bishop of Monmouth. Professor Heather Couper. astronomer, and Paul Vallely of the Independent set off across the Syrian desert to recreate the atmosphere of this exotic, mystical group and reflect on the aspirations of the present age.

the Day. 12.30 The Late Book: Out of Her 12.48 Shipping Forecast.

5.30 World News. 5.35 Shipping Forecast. 5.40 Inshore Forecast. 5.45 Prayer for the Day.

(198kHz ) **9.45 - 10.00** Daily Service. 12.00 · 12.04 News Headlines; Shipping Forecast. 5.54 - 5.57 Shipping Forecast. RADIO 5 LIVE (693, 909kHz MW )

Day. 10.45 Book at Bedtime: Chosen for Christmas. Five stars read their chosen seasonal tale. 4: Derek Jacobi reads 'Christmas at Dingley Dell' from 'The Pickwick Papers' by Charles Dickens. 11.00 The Modern Magi, 'The

11.30 Midnight Mass. See Pick of

1.00 As World Service.

5.47 - 6.00 Farming Today. **RADIO 4 LW** 

6.00 Breakfast.

9.00 Brian Hayes.

# INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

### CHESS JON SPEELMAN

as a result?

b) Whom was he supposed to play

c) What in fact happened? (1 word

will do fine, but you may amplify)

Q3 Black to move

3. What did Black play here (see

diagram above), and who was it?

4. a) Where did eight people have

a "balloon debate" for six places

b) Which English player, apart

5. Who received "Kosmic" remun-

The first three correct entries.

Send your entries to Jon Speel-

to ispeelman@compuserve.com -

from myself, stayed airborne?

last month?

eration at speed?

FOR OUR Christmas competition, defeat in Cazorla in Spain? you're invited to answer questions on chess world events in 1998:

Part I - Match the Brat Pack Match the following seven juniors with the achievements listed.

 Murugan Thiruchelvam 2. Nicholas Pert

3. Ruth Sheldon 4. Luke McShane

Simon Inglis. 8.00 Inside Edge. Rob Bonnet ex-5. Ruslan Ponomariov 6. Darmen Sadvakasov Tour de France, which was rocked 7. Hoang Thanh Trang

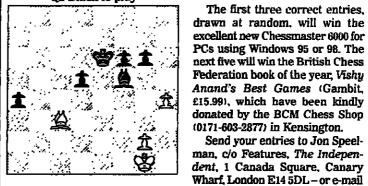
> a) World Girls' under-18 champion b) World Girls' champion (under 20) c) World Boys' under-18 champion d) World Junior champion (under

e) Is competing in the Hastings Premier, about to start. f) Youngest player ever to draw with a grandmaster.

g) Beat the same ex-Soviet Grandmaster twice in just over a week.

Part II - Events in 1998 The questions in this section are in chronological order.

Q1 Black to play



 What did Black now play (see diagram above) - and who is he?

2. a) Whom did the winner of Q1 day 18 January.

to arrive by Friday 8 January 1999. Results will be announced on Mon-

## **POKER** DAVID SPANIER

HOW MANY times do you get a the river, to give him a full house. straight flush in a lifetime of But down came a blank If I had bet, poker? It's a rare event. But I had two last week.

The first occurred in a low-level game of Omaha (the four-card version of Hold 'em) at the newly reopened Grosvenor Victoria. Sitting on the big blind I found Ah 9c 7c 5s. - a tolerable starting hand, if there is no risk of a raise behind

ou. Three callers ahead of me. The flop came down Jc 10c 6s which gave me four to a flush. In Omaha, if you haven't got an ace high flush to draw to, or at least the king, this is a high-risk hand, which you almost don't want to hit. So when someone bet £10, I was inclined to fold.

But then I noticed I had an inside draw to a straight flush. OK, for a tenner. I don't mind taking a long shot, so I called it. And to my astonishment, down came the 8c. like a piece of confetti, to fill my straight flush. Naturally, I checked it. The player who had bet on the flop, checked along. I did not know what he had in his hand, but as sure as heil he knew I had a flush. I was

hoping the board would pair up on

he would have folded, so I checked again. Assuming it was his pot, he mumbled an apology: "I had trip sixes on the flop, don't know why I didn't bet 'em." I spread my straight flush, with-

out comment. This incident served to remind me of the old truth about poker: there is no such thing as good hands, only good situations

The other occasion I hit a straight flush was in a jolly local game, where everyone bets it up regardless, for the sheer fun of gambling. In a variation called Big Cross, players get five cards in their hand and nine cards laid out in the shape of a cross. You have to use two from your hand with three others from either line of the cross - you know the sort of thing!

Just to make sure it's not boring, each player has the option of changing one card from his hand at the end of the betting. This time I hit a straight flush in diamonds. against a full house. Split between the high and the low hands, as such pots usually are, I cleared all of 32 quid. Heigh-ho.

# PICK OF THE DAY

AN ACTOR habitually described but ultimately doomed affair. He smoulders to similar effect in the satellite premiere of Leo Vronsky, the aristocrat with whom the wealthy Anna (Sophie Marceau) starts a passionate,

as "lean and mean", Sean Bean Anthony Quinn once recalled right) has cornered the market Hollywood's initial reaction to in strong, silent types (in that him: "they said all I was good for respect, playing Mellors in the was playing Indians." He soon BBC version of Lady Chatterley's proved them wrong, carving out Lover did him no end of good). a highly successful career in a wide range of roles stretching from his Oscar-winning display Tolstoy's Anna Karenina (8pm in Lust for Life to Zorba the Sky Premier). He plays Count Greek. He is the subject of tonight's Hollywood Hall of Fame (9.30pm Sky Cinema). JAMES RAMPTON



Intensive Care: The Problem with Men (5474637). **11.00** Forensic Detectives (6218683). **12.00** Intensive Care: The Problem with Men (1125651). **1.00** Connections 2 by James Burke (9657941). able Scorts (89 L30-2.00 Ancient Warriors (9903835). 8.00 Games World (4241163), 8.15 Games World (4231786), 8.30 Street

Sharks (22637), 9.00 The Simpsons (13989). 9.30 Earthworm Jim (41250). 10.00 Hercules - the Legendary Jourof Superman (11960), 12.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show (8437873). 12.55 The Special K Collection (53558908). **1.00** Days of Our Lives (9518182). **1.55** The Special K Collection (77860095). 2.00 Sa Jessy Raphael (6344989). 2.55 The Special K Collection (2343144). 3.00 Jenny Jones (7211366). 3.55 The Special K Collection (8874892), 4.00 Best of Gulltvl (62279), 5.00 Star Trek (8960), 6.00 Married with Children (8057), 6.30 Dream Team (2637), 7,00 The Simpsons Christ mas Special (6989). 7.30 The Simpsons (1521). 8.00 Friends (5637). 8.30 Friends (4144), 9.00 Friends (51163), 9.30 Friends (32502), 10.00 E R (71415), 11.00 Dream

(1996) (4152786), 1.10 Shallow Grave (1994) 5.00 Connections 2 by James Burke (2100811), 5.30 Jurassica (8764182), 6.00 Team (63908). 11.30 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (83618). 12.30 Highlander (66851). 1.30 - 8.00 Long Play (6710729). SKY SPORTS 1

7.00 Sky Sports Centre (8010811). 7:15 World Wrestling Federation Shot Gun

(359927), **8.15** Sky Sports Centre (826'502), **8.30** Table Football (98569), **9.00** Aerobics · Oz Style (72521), **9.30** Figure Skating (34415). 11.30 Unbeliev 960). 12-00 Aerobics - Oz Style (69057), 12.30 Superstars (33434). 2.30 Superbikes - Foggy's Hat-trick (13095). 4.30 Table Football (2298). 5.00 ing (8502). 6.00 Sky Sports Centre (93502). 7.00 Football Review (9231). 7.30 What a Weekend (3927), 8.00 Futbol Mundial (5279). 8.30 Strongman Welder Strongman Tournament (33786). 10.00 Sky Sports Centre (37095). 11.00 What a Weekend (20340). 11.30 Futbol Mundial (36705). 12.00 ice Skating World Challenge of Champions (21495). 1.00 Trans World Sport (88962). 2.00 What a Weekend (35835). 2.30 Futbol Mundial (47670). 3J00 The Rugby Club (81748).

4.00 Sports Centre (38831). 5.00 Close. SKY SPORT\$ 2 7.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (3272618), 7.30 Sky Sports Centre (5591908), 7.45 Water-sports World (6185144), 8.45 Sky Sports Centre (6286298). 9.00 Fish TV Fishing Texas (2139144). 9.30 Fish TV Americana Outdoors (3201076). 10.00 Golf Extra (7129637). 1.00 ice Skating World Challenge of Champions (3200347). 2.00 Table Football (8909291). 2.30 World Windsurfing (9036453). 3.00 Watersports World (8565095). 4.00 Survival of the Fittest (9027705). 4.30 Unbelievable Sports (9023989). 5.00 Football League Review (2204683), 5.30 Futbol Mundial

(9047569), 6.00 What a Weekend (903782). **6.30** The Rugby Club (6508502). **7.30** Survival of the Fittest (9024618). **8.00** Ice Skating World Chalenge of Champions (6633347). **9.00** Trans World Soort (6646811), 10.00 Fishing (8584366). 12.00 Strong Man - Weider Strongman Tournament (1210106). 1.30 The Rugby Club (1145564). 2.30 Sky Sports Centre (6192090). 3.30 Close SKY SPORTS 3 12.00 World Wrestling (48805811). 1.00

Fish TV Fishing Texas (94070144), 1.30 Fish TV Americana Outdoors (48892347). 2.00 Olympics: Golden Moments (67535347). 2.30 Sky Sports Classics Snooker - 1996 British Open Final (87002095), 3.30 Dancing IDSF World Latin (40064811). 4.30 Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Superstars (60479057). 6.30 Survival of the Fittest (93658076) 7.00 Fish TV (94091637). 9.00 The Rugby Club (65161569), 10.00 Football Scrapbook (56600453). 11.30 Close.

EUROSPORT 7.30 Xtrem Sports: Yoz Action (53786). 8.30 Xirem Sports (53075). 9.30 Olympic Games (61665). 11-00 Football: World Cup Legends (66434). 12.00 Karting (99786). 1.00 Strength (51714). 2.00 Trick-shot (28347). 4.00 Surno (70809). 5.00 Roller Skating (78637), 6.30 Four-Wheel Drive (2811), 7.00 Football (58415), 9.00 Boxing (29076). 10.00 Bowling (22163). 11.00-1.00 Olympic Games (33637).

bours (4297705). 7.55 EastEnders (4604182). **8.30** The Bill (8910502). **9.00** The Bill (8934182), 9.30 Middlemarch (9009076), 10.30 Angels (8930366), 11.00 Dallas (3344076), 11.55 Neigh-(2127076). 1.00 Middlemarch (7283231). 2.00 Dallas (6457415), 2.55 The Bit (2819366). 3.25 The Bill (6026366). 3.55 EastEnders (5883322). 4.30 Angels [76270298]. 4.55 Films: Carry On Christmas: Carry On Camping (1969) (20727908). 6.45 Christmas Cornedy Alternative: Only Fools and Horses (10028724). 8.20 Dad's Army (7190250). 9.00 One Foot in the Grave (5890434). 9.40 Men Behaving Badly (7758502). 10.20 Bottom (5418250). 11.00 The Bill (3324502). 11.30 The Bill (1032928). 12.00 Film: The Eiger Sanction (1975) (46882651). 2.15 Sight and Sound in Concert (1268835). 2.55 - 7.00 Shopping with Screenshop (48710835).

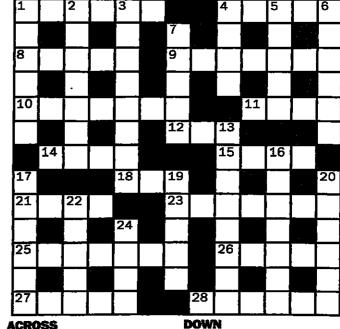
6.00 Tiny Living (9329095). 9.00 The Roseanne Show (4122521), 9.50 The Jerry Springer Show (5967724, 10.40 Michael Cole (3178182). 11.30 Brookside (1005434). 12.00 Ready, Steady, Cook (3166415). 12.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (1646076). 1.00 Film: An American Christmas Carol (1979) (7378076). 3.00 Films: The Song of Bernadette (1943) (8933502), 6,00 Christmas Glory (1654095). 7.00 Film: Miracle on 34th Street (1947) (1435144), 9.00 Film: Educating Fita (1983) (9717415). 11.00 Christmes Crackers: the Best of Living's 'Sex Files' (1431328). 12.00 Close.

9.00 The Wizard of Oz (1939) (65142434) 1LOO Meet Me in St Louis (1944) (51193434). 1.00 A Christmas Carol (1938) (39002496), 2.15 The Naked Spur (1953) (39702496). 3.45 Mad Love (1935) (85827019), **5.00** Close.

PARAMOUNT COMEDY CHANNEL 7.00 Clueless (7873). 7.30 Desmonds (1569), 8.00 Roseanne (6521), 8.30 Just Shoot Me (2328). 9.00 Cybil (70827). 9.30 Seinleid (29649), 10.00 Frasier (68326). 10.30 Cheers (77076). 11.00 Festival of Fun I (20322), 11L30 The Larry Sanders Show (34347). 12.00 Late Night with David Letterman (29038). 1.00 Taxi (55583). 1.30 The Critic (67816), 2.00 Dr Katz (33477), 2.30 Soap (45212) 3.00 Hooperman (42019) 3.30-4.00 Nightstand (36564).

# CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3802 Thursday 24 December



ACROSS With a crew (6)

Assuage (5) Right-hand page (5) Front tooth (7)

Leading role (4) Bag (anatom.) (3) 14 Cathedral dignitary (4) 15 Solemn vow (4) 18 Bill (3)

21 Press (4) 23 Greed (7) 25 Forceful (7) 26 Dubiety (5)

27 Man-made fibre (5) 28 EU country (6)

19 Sew with loose stitches (5) 20 Middle (6) 22 Kudos (5) 24 Incline (4)

Migratory bird (6)

Item of wear (7) Of fluent speech (8)

Curning (4) Cotton fabric (5)

13 Perforated utensil (8)

16 Homage (7)

17 Musical note (6)

Strong-scented plant (6) Rash (5)

Solution to vesterday's Concise Crossword: ACROSS: 1 Arras, 4 Meant (Harassment), 10 Arduous, 11 Aspen, 12 Hurry, 13 Aspetic, 15 Take, 17 Xeber, 19 Abeam, 22 Robe, 25 Buckled, 27 Able, 29 Newly, 30 Undress, 31 Myrrh, 32 Idyll, DOWN: 2 Radar, 3 Acolyte, 5 Erase, 6 Naphtha, 7 Cache, 8 Usual, 9 Knack, 14 Scab, 16 Acre, 18 Each way, 20 Bearded, 21 Ebony, 23 Odour, 24 Deism, 26 Layer, 28

# REGIONAL TELEVISION VARIATIONS

As Carlton except: 12.20 Angla News and Weather (6641279). 1.00 Di-nosaurs: Domesticated dinosaur sitcom Earl's sister comes to town (97365). 4.00 he latest live-action comedy block-iter, starring Eddie Murphy as the man who can speak to animals (434) 4.30
Angle News and Weather (618) 3.50
Firm: Echo of Diana: Betty McDowall
searches for missing husband Dermot
Walsh. Dreary British espionage B-feature from barrel-scraping poverty row mer-chants Butchers (6055545). 4.50 Soundtrax: Musicians talk about their work 193440729), 5.10 Hurricanes: Animated adventure featuring the Hurricanes, a football team who play in the world's first nternational football league (2697309).

As Cariton except: 9.25 ITN News Headines (4219366), 9.30 Central News (5)00434), 12.20 Central News and ather (6641279) 12.30 ITN News; Waather (48732) 4.00 Premiere: A lively guide to what's on in the Central region, covering music, movies, art and theatre (434). 4.30 Central News and Weather (618).

HTV WALES As Carlton except: 12.20 HTV
News (6641279) 1.00 Shortland Street:
Team spirit saves the day, Nick plays
Dick, Manny has second thoughts
(97366), 4.00 Dinosaurs (9849076),
4.25 Wales Tonight: The latest news
from across Wales (5365873),
3.50 Film: Echo of Diana (6055545),
4.50 Separativas (92440729), 5.40 Herit.

HTV WEST As HTV Wales except: 4.25 Wamer Brothers Cartoon (1044637). 4.40

MERIDIAN MERIDIAN
As Cartton except: 10.50 Film:
The Snow Queen: Feature-length animated version of the classic Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, featuring the voices of Helen Mirren, David Jason, voices of riesen Mitten, David Jason, Hugh Laurie, Julia McKenzie and Rik Mayali. In an ordinary house, in an ordi-nary town, Tom and Ellie live with their little sister and grandmother leading ornary town, town and buse live with their dittle sister and grandmother leading ordinary lives. But this is soon to change as, far away in her vast, frozen palace of ice, the Snow Queen piots to rule the world (5190182), 12.15 Meridian News and Weather (3335415), 1.00 Hope and Gioria (97366). 4.00 Country Ways Christmas Special: A short film about the countryside of Southern England-its wildlife, its natural history, its crafts and its people (434). 4.30 Meridian Tonight (618). 3.50 Film: Echo of Diena (6055545). 4.50 Soundtrax (93440729). 5.10 Huminanes (2987309). **5.10** Hurricanes (2697309).

WESTCOUNTRY

As Cariton except: 10.50 Film: The Snow Queen (\$190182), 12.15 Westcountry News (3335415), 12.27 Carols for Christy ness: Bramdean School Choir from Exster sings a selection of carols (6659296). 1.00 Emmerdale: Butch's secret tears the Dingles apart, and Biff gets angry about Kethy and Chris (97366). 4.00 Beadle's Hot Shots: Jeremy Beadle presents view ers' TV parodies and sketches, all made on their own carncorders (434). 4.30 stcountry Live: A round-up of news and views from across the West Country. presented by Alison Johns and Richard Bath. There's also a look at weather, sport and leisure in the region, and a guide to all the happenings on stage and screen over the next seven days in What's On West (518), 3.50 Film: Echo of Diana (8055545), 4.50 Soundinax (83440729).

5.10 Hurricanes (2697309).

YORKSHERE
As Cariton except: 12.20 Calendar
News and Weather (664/279). 1.00 Emmerdale (97366). 4.00 Calendar/Tonight
Xmas Eve Special: Join Christa Ackroyd,
Mike Morris and Christine Taibot for an
hour of festive itun as they take a look at
Christmases past and present. With music from the Ampleforth Choir and Jane
MedDonald (5368)

TYNE TEES As Yorkshire excepts 12.20 North
East News and Weather (5641279). 4.00
North East News (568963). 4.50 Curtains Up for Christmas: Pam Royle hosts
this musical celebration of Christmas from
Newcastle's Telewest Arena. She is joined
by four thousand children from schools
separated the perion and a host of celebrity. around the region and a host of calabrity guests, including Beverley Craven, Carls Maney and Shay Given (3218182).

As Channel 4 except: 12.35 Planed Plant (90213366). 1.35 The Bear's Tale (63506908). 4.30 Planed Plant: Carrin, Lowri and Bedwyr present the popular children's magazine pro-gramme. In this edition, Gair am Aur lau-the youth quiz programme - and Lined 5 (42770144). 8.90 Newyddion

(19615415). 6.05 Heno: Daily magazine show from Llanelli (49907366). 7.00 show from Llanelli (49907366). 7.00
Film: Porc Pel: Engaging drama about the trials and tributations of a young man who creates havoc wherever he goes, in this yarn, he plays in the local brass band and impersonates a famous surgeon (21591521). 8.00 Gwyl y Baban (25852144). 8.45 Melbion Glandwr: Drama series by Twm Miall and Ellir Jones. Although the Job of sandtexing Mr Hargreaver's house is a bonus, Wil suspects there is trouble afoot (71653075). 9.15 Newyddion (46243144). 9.30 Tua Bethlehem (69909237). 10.00 Friends: First episode of the sitcom about six New episode of the sitcom about six New York twentysomethings which includes some praviously unseen footage, inclu-ing a compilation of bloopers and gattes, plus a song by Phoebe (21590892). 11.00 Snow Graham Nor-ton: Cornecian Graham Norton presents a spontaneous and over-the-top Christ-

mas celebration. Guests including La-Toya Jackson join him under the tree a he explores the worlds of glove purposets ne expanse ne waste of grove puppers and European sex lines (53743724). 11.40 Harry Hill's Christmas Sleigh Ride (75798786). 12.40 Film: Exclusive (93635922). 2.25 Close.

A SECOND SECOND

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MATTHEW SWEET TELEVISION REVIEW

us simple. Our man Louis in of Paul, If you didn't know) ant some quality time in the mes of people who resented some of the ward afte environments.

ountered a gun-totin' white remackst, who wanted to blacks, Jews and gays ad off the face of the earth, also turned out to be a big of Are You Being Served? r Louis Theroux's Weird Istmas (BBC2), he rned their hospitality.

inessages from the going to do the washing up.
There were even weirder
Hings going down on 100 Per
Cent Guide to Sex (C5), a
special edition of the daily quiz
that kept its attention fixed
firmly below the belt. The
proliferation of quiz shows on
daytime TV has led to a
shortage of good hosts. The
BBC has even brought Fred
BBC has even brought Fred
Dineage from How! on of their
ireary lunchtime efforts. 100%
solves this problem by not
having a host at all, just a
mysterious voice which poses a
gorles of multiple choice

the processes, attarily forgetting the of his day job. Randy oblems with being asked is up as Father nas (or "Satan Claws", nsisted on calling him). Short had problems thing Korton the extrating Korton the extrating ljudging by the rithary gurgling noises making as he struggled leve psychic link-up). And if had problems keeping a at face as the Reverend u might expect, there few tensions. JJ had a n with Randy's goggle-illelujah-ing.("I don't igs shoved down.my down my that Anne Diamond did not play the title role in Emmanuelle, and that Viagra was not produced in the Irish town of Gotastiffy. Unfortunately, Caroline thought that it was Shere Cliff who compiled a survey of sexual attitudes, and Iris Murdoch who said, "vice is stions. Ostensibly, it's a), b)
but in reality e) is usually coy for dodos. Contestants ollne, Peter and Dusty tted that the Greek god of lifty was not Uptheduffus, Anne Diamond did not play title role in Emmanuelle, the Vices of the contest of the colors.

doormobile as JJ took part in a porn shoot on the banks of the Hudson. But his disapproval was more than made up for by

gets lonely living underground in the woods with only the coneys and his rifle for company. Christmas Day itself went quite well – once Randy had decided that instead of yelling about which of the guests was most likely to burn in the everlasting flames of Hell, he'd just leave the room when something he disliked started to happen. The Therovian Christmas message was that if these guys could get on, we shouldn't have too much trouble. However, we didn't see the arguments about who was going to do the washing un. 100

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human warmth that ided somewhere within all hem. For instance, behind a bed-wire fence somewhere

ans or crooks, he ded them cajoled them for the benefit of the sat home, and hinted at

8.30 Birds of a Feather. Continuing the final series (always a dodgy time for sitcoms). Sharon and Tracey pay a visit to ireland to attend the reading of a will as Dorien tags along to meet her latest purchase, an irish racehorse (S) (T) (388328).

9:10 News; Regional News; Weather (1) (866250).

10.30 The Moonstone. Yet another chance to see (it's almost become a modern seasonal staple) Kevin Elyot's adaptation of Wilkle Collins's classic detective story.

Hawes gets a hday - the

itone, stolen from an Indian shrine by her wick er uncle. Now read on... (R) (S) (T) (69645724)

10.20 Meetings with Remarkable Trees (R) (158106).

1969 UK). British GP Jim Date stumbles upon a potentially lucrative witch-doctor's weight-reducing potlon white working in the South Sees. With Kenneth Williams, Sid James, Charles Hawtrey and the rest (Followed by Westher) (7493835). To 210am. 12.40 []]]]] The Haunting (Robert Wenterfaining ghost story set in a Victory set and the New England – a fabulously designer

BBCI

her (3598601), 7.10 Tales of the Tooth 3), 7.15 Teletubbles (5993057), 7.40 359), 8.05 Taz-Manla (7242057), 8.30 4095), 8.65 Sweet Valley High (82835-Farne (8397786), 9.55 Teletubbles

10.30 ITIMI All I Want for Christmas (Robert Lieberme 1991 US). A girl whose mother is about to remarry asks Senta to reunite her divorced parents in this fairytale for the post-nuclear dysfunctional family (577/1328).

 11.55 The New Adventures of Superman (9189415).
 12.45 Good Neighbours (73736366). 12.55 News;
 Weather (36279889). 1.10 Neighbours (5) (T) (58847057). 1.35 (1)(1) Lassie: a New Generation (Daniel Petrie 1994 US) (S) (T) (7726847).

3.45 IIIM The Santa Clause (John Pasquin 1994 US).
Divorced father Tim Alien must compete for his son's affections with the boy's new stepfather (S) (T) (181873).
5.15 Neighbours (S) (T) (873/1502). 3.05 Live and Kicking Mystory Toons (S) (5570231)

5.40 Whatever You Want for Christmas. Seasonal edition of "Caby"il Fix It", with La Roslin making wishes come true for three budding ballerinas, and a young boy who wants to become a superhero for the day (223786).

6.30 News; Weather; Regional News (T) (845)

Celebrity Ready, Steady, Cook. Barbara Windsor and Lily Savage buy the ingredients for Ainsley Harriott and Antony Worrali Thompson (S) (T) (6347).

7.30 EastEnders. Grant's freedom is in the balance as Tiffany gives her version of what happened on the stairs in the ongoing balustrade-hanger (S) (T) (279).

8.00 Animal Hospital. The emergency services attempt to rescue a cat with his head stuck between two cupboards on a canal boat (S) (T) (5095).

9.30 BIODE Jonathan Creek. "Black Canary". Rik Mayall Joins Alan Davies and Caroline Quentin for this one-off mystery. See Whodunnits of the Day. below (S) (T) (65637).

9.30 **EXIGINE** The Search for Shangri-Ia. Fascinating travelogue documenting historian Charles Allen's attempts to prove the existence of the mythical ancient paradise of Shangri-Ia (S) (T) (844521).

11.40 Christmas is Coming. Candle-lit carols from St Glies Cathedral in Edinburgh (S) (812502).

If you smell gas call 0800 111 999 THE EVEN OVE

JONATHAN CREEK (9.30pm BBC1, dg/n); THE RUTH RENDELL MYSTERIES (9.30pm ITV) The popular chan

WHODUNNITS OF THE DAY

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only to find it overrun with gangsters (led by Edward G Robinson), before falling in love with the owner (Lauren Bacall) (97698786).

10,40 ITIMI To Have and Have Not (Howard Hawks 1944 US). Humphrey Bogart plays the cynical neutral who must decide whether to join the Free French in Martinique. The magic in this post Casabianos Hemingway adaptation was supplied by Lauren Bacalls sexy movie debut. She and Bogart tell in love on set (45657498).

2.05 [][M] Shenandoah (Andrew V McLaglen 1965 US). James Stewart in superior US Civil War tale (T) (868415)

6.05 Rex the Runt (S) (T) (271892).

**6.35 (G)(0)(3) It's a Wonderful Life** (Frank Capra 1946 US), Capra's seasonal classic with suicidal Jemes

8,30 Heartheat. The soft-focus Sixties bobby series would have had its seasonal special on Christmas Day in the glory Nick Berry years, so this is something of a demotion. A pregnant woman fears for her baby after a series of ghostly events lead her to believe her house is haunted, and the Craddocks and Boltons fight it out at the Christmas charity dance (S) (T) (54453).

8 GIOGE The Ruth Rendell Mysteries: You Can't Be Too Careful. Serena Evans and Jane Hazlegrove play odd-couple flatmates in this psychological thriller. See Whodunnits of the Day, below Haziegrove play or psychological thrill (S) (T) (6063347).

30 Christmas Glory. Princess Anne introduces music from St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle (T) (43989). 35 ITN News; Weather (T) (737950).

50 This is Celine Dion. Behind-the-scenes look at the Canadian singer's sell-out tour of 1997, with footage from an appearance in Memphis, Tennessee (T) (331927).

30 [211] Brief Encounter (David Lean 1945 UK).
Respectable, buttoned-up and married (to other people)
Cella Johnson and Trevor Howard meet on a train and
fall so, so in love in this classic love story (325854). **TIME Christmas on Division Street** (George Kaczender 1991 US). Youth befriends a homeless man he meets at the public library (264090). To 3.50am.

) (T) (256090

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BBC2

background southers (John Huston 1948 US).

7.35 TIM Key Large (John Huston 1948 US).

Disillusioned war veteran retires to Florida Ke 6.10 IIIM Modern Times (Charlie Chaplin 1936 US).
Chaplin's final masterplece of "silent" (It uses the background sounds of machinery) comedy (7847182)

9.15 IIIII One Magic Christmas (Philip Borsos 1985 US). Capra-esque corn (5) (8890616).

12.20 Rex the Runt (6647453). 12.40 The West (7728618).

**3.45 Choir of the Year** (S) (T) (4560368). **4.25** Carols from King's (S) (2280298). **5.40** The Simpsons (517705)

**6.15 The Simpsons.** After being stopped for drink-criving. Homer tries to give up beer for 30 days (R) (900892).

The BIII. Arsenal's French midfielder Emmanuel Petit has been injured of late, which gave him the opportunity to do a spot of guest-starring in the Christmas episode of the revitalised plod soap. He plays himself, paying a hospital visit to a little girl knocked down in a little-and-run incident (1) (89811).

11.15 David Biaine's Street Magic (1) (561231).

3.50 LILLY House of Wax (André De Toth 1953 US), Vincent Price again, as a mad sculptor (6053187), To 5.25am

FILM OF THE DAY

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Children's ITV: Paddington (77737328), 2.10
Animaniacs (T) (17058927), 2.35 Hey Arnold! (T) (8728340), 3.00 in the House with Cleopatra... and Friends (T) (1873), 4.00 Animal SOS (S) (434), 4.30 London Tonight (518), 5.00 News; Weather (3816182)

15 Idlivi sister Act 2: Back in the Habit (Bill Duke 1993 US). The original Sister Act movie was an amusing comedy about a lounge singer (Whoopl Goldberg) on the run from her mobster boyfriend, dressing as a nun and hiding out in a convent. Goldberg's manic performance (nicely counterpointed by Maggie Smith's Mother Superior) made the movie and it proved to be box-office dynamite. This inevitable and needless sequel is mainly an exercise in cashing-in (S) (T) (23804892).

OD Emmerdale. Lisa struggles to reunite the Dingles for Christmas, and Andy is blackmalled away from the Sugdens (S) (T) (1415).

8.30 The Christmas Italian Kitchen. It's way too late for you to go out and do any of this, of course, but here are Italian alternatives to Christmas pudding (T) (7940).

9.30 Father Ted Christmes Special. Another chance to see last year's festive one-off. Ted, Dougal and six other priests take a wrong turn during a shopping trip and find themselves lost in a lingurie department. However, Ted's quick thinking saves the day (A) (S) (T) (6061989).

10.38 Snow Graham Norton. Guests including Latoya Jackson, as Norton explores the worlds of glove puppets and European sex lines (562750).

12:10 IIII Black Christmas (Bob Clark 1975 US).
Channel 4 sees in Christmas Day with a trio of aboveaverage horror movies. Who's killing college girls? (741583).

**00 GMTV** (1969637). **9.25** ITN News Headlines (4200618).

Filth The Snow Queen (Chris Randall 1995 UK). Feature-length animated version of the classic Hans Christian Andersen fairytale, featuring the voices of Helen Mirren, David Jason, Hugh Laurie, Julia McKenzle and Rik Mayall (S) (T) (5793540).

Your Shout (6641279). 12.30 News; Weather (T) (48732). 1.00 The Baldy Man (97366). 1.30 Charlotte Church – in Her Own Words (98273).

7.00 Heroes of Comedy: Tony Hancock. Another chance to see this tribute to the troubled comic genius who died in Australia in 1968. Paul Merton, Peter Hall, Sieve Coogan, John Junkin and June Whitfield are among the admirers, old friends and colleagues (R) (S) (T) (7163).

8.00 Burnt Bits. Compliation of TV cookery mishaps including Ainsley Harriotts brief moment of speechlessness, and Brian Turner's exploding piping bag (1) (8705).

9.00 Rising Damp. Rigsby is facing the prospect of a lonely Christmas, until Alan and Philip arrive unexpectedly (R) (T) (7434).

2.00 IIII Theatre of Blood (Douglas Hickox 1873 US). Villiflad classical actor Vincent Price revenges himself on eight drama critics. A terrific cast includes Diana Rigg, Harry Andrews and Michael Hordern (T) (939038).

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THURSDAY REVIEW
The Independent 24 December 1998

Children's ITV: Tiny Toon Adventures (R) (S) (T) (1878811). 10.00 Rocky and the Dodos (R) (3262502). 10.45 Art Attack Christmas Cracker (R) (S) (2907250). 700

DO For Better for Worse (96637). 7.30 The Magic Keeper (75144). 8.00 The Big Breakfast (S) (T) (40960). 10.00 Buzz (50347). 10.30 Eerie, Indiana (S) (T) (9826724). 10.55 The Secret World of Alex Mack (R) (S) (4185366). 11.30 Moesha (S) (T) (8927). 12.00 Madison (6846637). 12.35 Ted Hughes: In His Own Words (R) (4406231). 1.05 The Real Nativity Show (R) (4640429).

4.30 The Snowman. The first of two Raymond Briggs animations. Followed by... (R) (S) (T) (960). 2.05 [III] Annie (John Huston 1982 US). A John Huston musical? Well, quite, At \$80 million (not much of which seems to have landed on the screen), this is a strangely disengaged affair, thanks to some choppy editing and mediocre songs. Carot Burnett is the most eye-catching character, as the orphanage head, while a shaven Albert Finney plays the billionaire Daddy Warbucks (85799095).

5.00 The Bear. Raymond Briggs' new one, about a zoo bear who takes up residence with a little girl, Features the voice of 12-year-old "chart sensation" Charlotte

5.30 Countdown (S) (T) (540). Church (T) (2521)

6.00 A Perfect Carry On. Barbara Windsor celebrates 40 years of Carry On movies, along with "connoisseurs" Janet Street-Porter, Dale Winton, Malcolm Bradbury, Richard O'Brien and Philip Dodd (R) (T) (13453).

**6.00 100 Per Cent.** The game show (2238637).

3.40 [AIII] The Adventures of Baron Munchausen (Terry Gilliem 1989 US). Levish, occasionally inspired, but generally disappointing fantasy epic about the 19th-century fabulist. With John Neville, Eric Idle, Oliver Reed, Uma Thurman and Sting (S) (95088908).

1.50 IIIII A Different Kind of Christmas (Tom McLaughlin 1996 US). Yet enother reworking of A Christmas Carot, with Shelley Long as a mean-spirited lawyer discovering the spirit of the season when she meets a troublesome Santa (S) (T) (81928786).

### Pind in the Willows (R) (25772453). 6.20

Rooberb (R) (32771724). 6.30 Dappledown Farm (R) (4451908). 7.00 Wimzle's House (R) (S) (5887095). 7.30 Milkshaket (S) (2426095). 7.35 Havakazoo (6098298). 8.00 George of the Jungle (R) (7492250). 8.30 What a Mess (7491521). 9.00 Loggerheads (R) (7482873). 9.30 USA High (2012231). 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (9974908). 10.20 Surriset Beach (5695219). 11.10 Leeza (6384927). 11.55 Russell Grant's Postcards (99856637). 12.00 5 News at Noon (7402637). 12.30 Family Affairs (2023347). 1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful (6886386). 1.30 Sons and Daughters (87554980).

7.10 Project Orizzly. Documentary about a man who invented a bear-proof suit after being attacked by a grizzly (T) (6419778).

6.30 Family Affairs. Annie is lurious when she finds a drunken Chris dencing with Sadie. And so it goes on (S) (T) (7567540).

8.40 Xena: Warrior Princess. Responding to an urgent message from King Llas, Xena decides to go away for a few days, leaving Gabrielle and Joxer behind. That may seem significant to someone. You never know (S) (2865827).

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9.00 EILM Behind Closed Doors (Catherine Cyran 1894 US). Chiller about a man (Barry Bostwick) who murders his wheelchair-bound wife (a pre-Sunset Beach Lesley-Anne Down) with the help of her stepdaughter, with whom he is having an affair. Soon he begins to hear strenge noises and receive mysterious telephone calls in the middle of the night, is he losing his sanity, or is someone trying to drive him insane? If you're not even slightly interested, then at least look out for Usa Kudrow in a pre-Frierro's appearance (S) (T) (38529057).

10.50 Melinda's Big Night In. La Massenger's guests toright are Mark Lamarr, Steven Houghton, Mr C and The Shamen (S) (2759163).

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11.30 Stags and Hens (R) (S) (T) (79/3786).

12.30 IIIM Faster, Pussycatt Kill Kill (Russ Meyer 1965 US). The first in a season of Russ Meyer movies, which Channel 5 has probably bought for their pornographic interest, although they are also amusing in a mad sort of way (S) (2033729).

**IIIM** The High Price of Passion (Larry Elikann 1986 US). A college professor is driven to murder by his infatuation with a hooker (S) (7745670). To 3.50am: Tellvision Guide by Gerard Gilbert

"Doggerel trying to pass as art", was Pauline Kael's harsh assessment of Frank Capra's seasonal evergreen. If you've never seen it (in which case correct that omission at once), James Stewart is the smalltown stalwart who feels he has wasted his life running the family savings and loan bank when he could have got an education and seen the world. Contemplating suicide, he is taken in heard by his guardian angel (Henry Travers), who shows him what life would have been like had he never been born. Expertly crafted and hugely sentimental, BBC2 has scheduled it to perfection.

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